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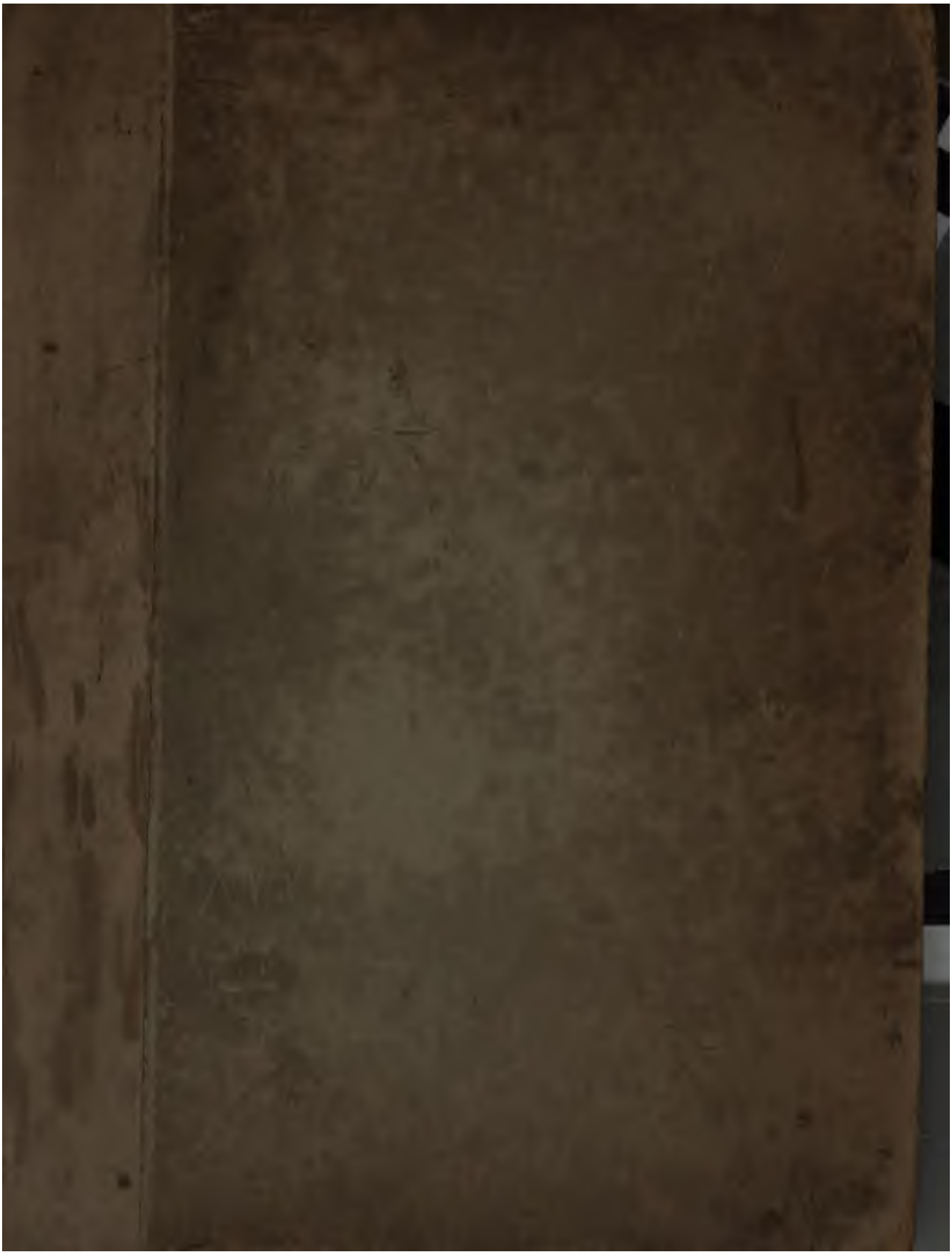
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FOR ENGLISH LITERATURE



"THE STRID," ON THE WHARFE, BOLTON WOODS.



HOLIDAY STUDIES

OF

WORDSWORTH

BY RIVERS, WOODS, AND ALPS.

THE WHARFE, THE DUDDON,

AND

THE STELVIO PASS.

BY

REV. F. A. MALLESON, M.A.,

VICAR OF BROUGHTON-IN-FURNESS,

AUTHOR OF "JESUS CHRIST, HIS LIFE AND WORK," "ACTS AND EPISTLES OF ST. PAUL;"
EDITOR OF "RUSKIN'S LETTERS TO THE CLERGY ON THE LORD'S PRAYER,"
ETC. ETC.

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DEDICATION.

NOT alone as homage due to distinguished rank, but much more as a poor (would it were a rich!) tribute to conspicuous, yet modest civic, social and domestic, virtue, and a lofty and dignified patriotism as noble and generous as it is affecting, I dedicate (by permission) to

WILLIAM, SEVENTH DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE, K.G., F.R.S., etc.,

this feeble attempt (associated with other earlier writings) to portray the natural beauties and to record some of the historic memories of one of the ancestral homes and sacred fanes of England.

F. A. MALLESON.

PREFACE.

THE present Volume is a small collection of papers written at rather distant intervals, of which the partiality of kind friends has encouraged me to believe that they would not willingly allow them to be lost.

They have therefore been gathered together, by courteous permission of the editors, out of the magazines in which they originally appeared, with the exception of the paper on "Bolton Abbey," written in 1889, which has not been printed before.

The Westmorland Girl died in my own parish in 1872, and the paper so entitled appeared in *Sunday at Home* in 1873. "Wordsworth and the Duddon"—the result of a couple of days spent in solitude, pencil in hand, in the beautiful Duddon Valley—appeared in *Good Words* in 1883. Considerable additions, however, have been made since then. These three pieces are therefore more or less illustrations of the life and works of a great Poet Laureate. The "Swiss Notes" and the "Stelvio Pass" were written during a sojourn of three weeks at the Baths of Bormio, as English chaplain, in Sept., 1883, and, like the Duddon paper, the latter was entirely written in pencil on the spot, with those grand Alpine scenes before my eyes—even when I could scarcely hold my pencil for the cold at an elevation of close upon ten thousand feet. The last two papers have appeared in *Anglo-Austria*, a well-conducted magazine, first published in January, 1890, at Meran in Tyrol.

The grateful duty remains of returning sincerest thanks to Lady Louisa Egerton for her most kind and able assistance in the historical portion of the paper on Bolton Abbey, without which assistance the author would scarcely have ventured upon this undertaking; also to the Rev. A. P. Hows, Rector of Bolton Abbey, whose interesting guide book has rendered valuable assistance.

CONTENTS.

BOLTON ABBEY.

PAGE

PART I.—HISTORICAL: Modern History hardly less sorrowful than Mediæval—First View of the Abbey—Wharfedale in Primeval Times—Antiquity of the Church of Bolton—The Tragedy of the Strid and the Foundation of Bolton Priory—Wordsworth—Traces of its Early History—The Western Tower—"Blackfaced Clifford"—The Shepherd Lord—The Nut-brown Maid—Bolton Abbey Granted to the Cliffords of Skipton—Disputes between the Lords of Craven—The Rising in the North—The White Doe of Rylstone and the Fate of the Nortons—Personal Habits of the Lords of Skipton Castle—The Castle and its Historic Portraits—The Buccaneering Lord—Anne Countess of Dorset and her State—The Countess Pillar—The Bolton Abbey Estates, and the House of Cavendish 13

Part II.—DESCRIPTIVE: The Strid—Rev. W. Carr and the Picturesque Rustic Seats—The Loveliness of the Woods in Spring—Subdued Light for Woodland Scenery—Barden Tower—Characteristics of Spring Foliage—The Mountain Ash and above-ground Roots—The Valley of Desolation—The Great Waterspout of 1826—Posforth Gill—Formation of Mountain Streams—Heber's Ghyll—Weathering of Rocks—Bolton Abbey Churchyard—Nature the Beautifier of Ruin and Decay—Lord Frederick Cavendish—The Good Time that *will* come, "though it tarry" 28

WORDSWORTH'S "WESTMORLAND GIRL."

Broughton-in-Furness and the Duddon—Sarah Mackereth "The Westmorland Girl"—Her Beauty and Refinement—Fading Away—Unexpected Discovery that she was Wordsworth's Heroine, his "Lamb Deliverer"—Story of the Deliverance of the Lamb from Drowning—The Scene by Grasmere Lake—Primitive Times at Grasmere—Sarah Tolling the Passing Bell—Sarah "loved all things great and small"—Nathaniel Hawthorne at Grasmere—Passing away—Visited by Angels—Laid at rest in Broughton Churchyard—Human Interest needed for the True Enjoyment of Beautiful Scenery ... 39

WORDSWORTH AND THE DUDDON.

PAGE

Duddon Sonnets—A Two Days' solitary Visit to the Duddon Valley in September, 1882—Seathwaite Tarn—Birks Brigg and Gowdrel Dub—Glittering Transparency of the Water—Cockley Beck—Division of the Valley—Hardknot and Wrynose—Wild Deer—Three Shire Stones—Source of the Duddon—Dioptrics of a running Brook—Varieties of Effects in a Mountainous Country—Coming down to the Pastures and the Farms—Seathwaite Church—Rev. Robert Walker "The Wonderful"—Original Information—Stepping-Stones—Wallabarrow Crag—The Red Felsite Dike—Ulpha Kirk—Dunnerdale Fells—Duddon Woods—Duddon Hall—Rowfold Bridge—Flowering Plants and Ferns—Buckbarrow Volcanic Crags—If England were subject to Volcanic Eruptions?—Glacier Polished Rocks—A Day with Ruskin at the Weathered Rocks of Goat's Water—Ruskin's Confession of Faith in Christianity in "Præterita"—Duddon Bridge and Duddon Sands 53

SOME SWISS NOTES.

By the Lake of Neuchâtel: The Castle and the Battle of Grandson — Yverdon—Education in Switzerland—Temperance—Great Storm of 1877—Bormio—The Iron Gates of Cepina—Lago di Scale—Abundance of Churches and Wayside Shrines—Santa Caterina—Study of Alpine Scenery—Decay and Beggary at Bormio—Cretinism 77

THE STELVIO PASS.

History of the Great Road—Ascent on Foot—Alpine compared with English Lake Scenery—The Tunnels and Galleries—Hot Springs of Bormio—Dolomite—Long Waterfalls—The Spondalunga—Fighting in 1858—The Zigzags—Cold barren Region—Monte Cristallo—Fourth Cantonière—Summit—View over the Ortler Range—Sublime Scenery—Its Effect on Different Minds—Down to Trafoi—The Murderer Tourville—The Madatsch Glaciers by Night and by Sunrise—Ruskin on Alpine Scenery—The "Three Holy Springs"—The Church at Trafoi—Descent to Meran—Charles Dickens on Alpine Scenery 95

Bolton Abbey and Woods.

"Straight mine eye hath caught new pleasures,
While the landscape round it measures;
Russet lawns and fallows grey,
Where the nibbling flocks do stray:
Mountains, on whose barren breast
The labouring clouds do often rest:
Meadows trim with daisies pied,
Shallow brooks and rivers wide,
Towers and battlements it sees,
Bosom'd high in tufted trees."

L'ALLEGRO.

BOLTON ABBEY AND WOODS.

PART I.—HISTORICAL.

Modern History hardly less sorrowful than Mediæval—First View of the Abbey—Wharfedale in Primeval Times—Antiquity of the Church of Bolton—The Tragedy of the Strid and the Foundation of Bolton Priory—Wordsworth—Traces of its Early History—The Western Tower—"Blackfaced Clifford"—The Shepherd Lord—The Nut-brown Maid—Bolton Abbey Granted to the Cliffords of Skipton—Disputes between the Lords of Craven—The Rising in the North—The White Doe of Rylstone and the Fate of the Nortons—Personal Habits of the Lords of Skipton Castle—The Castle and its Historic Portraits—The Buccaneering Lord—Anne Countess of Dorset and her State—The Countess Pillar—The Bolton Abbey Estates, and the House of Cavendish.

IN the autumn of 1888 I spent part of a short holiday in visiting, for the first time, the marvellously beautiful scenery of that portion of Wharfedale where lie, in their emerald shrine, the singularly interesting ruins of Bolton Abbey. It has often been remarked that our fair England, abounding as it still does in lovely sylvan scenes, nowhere surpasses the peerless beauties of the Bolton woods that overhang the Wharfe on both its banks. Nowhere is seen such an infinite variety of manifold hues of foliage; nowhere such graceful and perpetually changing disorder of innumerable forms of richest splendour of woodland beauty.

This spot of English land abounds in most interesting historical reminiscences. A stroll from Bolton Abbey by Barden Tower, and on to Rylstone Fell and the melancholy ruins of Norton Tower, leads us through a poetic land, filled with records of unspeakable grief and sorrow that overshadow the far-distant past; for the pages of history are blotted with the tears of women and stained with the blood of heroes. We are often made painfully sensible how rankly conspicuous stand out the records of crime and misery above the lost and forgotten annals of a human happiness, which undoubtedly did exist in abundance; and as we wander in peace, none molesting us, amidst these

calm and silent woods, we rejoice with trembling that our lot is cast in happier days, when crime and open wickedness, let us hope, do perhaps bear a smaller proportion to domestic and to national happiness than in the mediæval times. And yet it may be that to those who shall come after us, it will seem that this close of the nineteenth century was almost as troubled as the centuries to which these sad ruins bear such melancholy testimony.

With no other preparation than some few historical reminiscences out of Dr. Whitaker's old "History of Craven" and contributions from Wordsworth's poems, we alight from our train at the recently built station of Bolton Abbey, from which it is distant one mile. Our first glimpse of the Abbey is caught through what is graphically called the "Hole in the Wall"—a wide breach made long ago, one would think, partly with the intention to destroy, but certainly more with a view to the picturesque, as appropriately affording a romantic peep at a ruin through a ruinous gap in a high wall.* Above where now the stately and majestic ruin rises in mournful pomp from its setting amidst rich meadow-land, and encircled by groups of noble ash-trees (the solemn abode of hooting owls), there, about the middle of the twelfth century, under the earlier Plantagenets, the crystal Wharfe ran swiftly through wild, tangled, and disordered woods of overgrown, untended trees, sweeping with the steely gleam of a curving scimitar round the devious river reaches. An awful silence reigned, broken only by the voices of rolling waters, the cry of the birds, and the savage growls or yells of boars and wolves. There, "O sylvan *Wharfe*, thou wanderer through the woods,"

> "Again I hear
> Thy waters rolling from their mountain springs
> With a soft inland murmur.
> And here I stand not only with the sense
> Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts
> That in this moment there is life and food
> For future years."

"Yes! for the time will come when the charm of shadows of old

* It is believed that this rude gap was made, and so left, by the Rev. W. Carr, who was rector of Bolton Abbey from 1789 to 1843. To his taste and judgment Bolton Abbey and Woods owe much of their present beauty.

thoughts and long-lost delights shall hang like morning mist above the chanting waves of Wharfe and Greta." *

Yet, although unproved by documents, there seems a strong probability that the great Priory was not the first House of God erected upon this favoured spot; for notwithstanding the silence of Domesday Book (which often tells us nothing where we believe it ought to speak), a small rude church stood here in the Anglo-Saxon period. To this day the parish church of Bolton Abbey, which is the nave of the Abbey, is called the "Saxon Cure," and, therefore, here (just as in the writer's church of Broughton-in-Furness, and in many other very ancient parish churches) divine worship has been uninterruptedly celebrated since times anterior to the Norman Conquest. Then follows a sad and romantic story, of which we decline to entertain historic doubts, preferring, on the whole, the testimony of tradition and poetry to that of mouldy and doubtful documents, or, worse still, the absence of them—*documenta nocumenta.*

William de Meschines (that is, *de Mes chiens*) founded in 1121 a priory church at Embsay, a few miles from Bolton, and died, leaving his extensive domains to his daughter, the Lady Alice de Romilly, who had an only son. This youth, a hardy and adventurous lad, fond of field sports, wandering one day (his last upon earth) at large over the wide uncleared forests, which formed the splendid domain of his house, reached, by a well-worn path, the banks of Wharfe, at that remarkable spot (intended to be hereafter described) where the breadth of the river, hemmed in between two great beds or banks of hard gritstone, suddenly contracts from full thirty yards to only three or four feet, and rushes furiously through the deep dark gorge in a frantic torrent, chafing with an incessant deep and solemn roar.

Young Romilly had many a time bounded across the dangerous sword-like sweep of steel-black water; but he forgot the deerhound, which he was still holding in the leash. The hound refused the leap; the boy was suddenly checked on the opposite rock (in which the greatest, and almost only, real danger lies), and, staggering back, was in

* "Modern Painters."

a moment "in the arms of Wharfe, and strangled by a merciless force. For never more was young Romilly seen Till he rose a lifeless corse."

Tradition says that the forester who witnessed this tragic scene returned to the bereaved and widowed mother, and, endeavouring to break the news gently, asked, his countenance betraying his hidden meaning—"What is good for a bootless Bene?" "What is the remedy for a fruitless prayer?"

Divining the meaning at once, she replied, "Endless sorrow." But she sought consolation in works of mercy, and chiefly in raising a pious monument to the dear memory of her child; and staying some scarcely-begun works at Embsay, selected this spot, two miles below the fatal Strid, where the Wharfe sweeps round in a beautiful curve, embracing verdant meadows on its right bank, and a rich abundance of forest foliage on its left. Here, in the year 1151, the lady founded on a fair level, taking in the rude edifice of the (probably) wooden Saxon church already referred to, the noble Priory of Bolton Abbey, now, alas! a mere shell—a ruin, excepting the old nave, which is now the parish church—a ruin with just enough of it left faintly to indicate its ancient stateliness and majesty. Such is the tradition of the founding of Bolton Abbey; and its beauty may well plead for it some indulgence against the merciless criticism which finds so much pleasure in sweeping away very much that constitutes some of the principal charms of history.

And the lady of Barden Tower did find solace in her pious work, for—

> "Oh! there is never sorrow of heart
> That shall lack a timely end,
> If but to God we turn and ask
> Of Him to be our friend."

This is not the place for an accurate description of the Abbey, and I will only mention two or three points of salient interest, of which the first seems to be that Divine service has been celebrated without intermission in the nave of the abbey (which is eighty-eight feet long) from the first establishment of Christianity, the altar-table standing now in, or very near, the same spot where it has stood for probably ten centuries.

. Following the ancient pious custom, the building of Bolton Priory began with the choir, and gradually worked westward. In cathedral and abbey building generally, at the crossing where the transepts traverse the grand and lofty sweep of the spacious line from choir to nave, it was always desired or intended to build a tower and spire—a noble design rarely carried out for lack of local engineering skill to secure a sufficient foundation, and to build piers thereon able to sustain the ponderous tower, to say nothing of a spire upon that. At Bolton Abbey this architectural feat appears to have been accomplished; but the performance was followed by a ruinous fall, involving the destruction of the original twelfth-century choir and transepts, which, instead of now bearing evident marks (as they should) of an older date than the nave, show that they were actually erected a century later, proving that the tower must have fallen—the common fate of many a twelfth- or thirteenth-century tower. But as so noble a work as a cathedral or an abbey could not be regarded as complete without a tower, fresh ground was usually opened at the western extremity, and hence it happens that we so often find the tower adorning the west end, instead of adding dignity to the centre of the building.

The western tower of Bolton Abbey was begun in 1520, but was never completed. Twenty years later came the suppression and the spoliation of the monasteries, and the building of the beautiful tower was stopped, in all probability never to be resumed. The thirteenth-century west window, which was to have been taken down, opening the nave and tower into one, is there still, resting against the half-finished tower, an instructive though far from a satisfactory lesson in English history.

The Rectory, dated 1701, close to the ruins, forms an interesting example of the domestic architecture of the seventeenth century.

Though here we stand on classic ground, consecrated by history, by romance, and by poetry, our notices must necessarily be brief; but we may not pass by the stories of Henry Clifford, the Shepherd Lord; of Anne, Countess of Dorset and Pembroke; and the fate of the Nortons.

Referring in our Shakespeare to the Second Part of *King Henry VI.*, we find named more than once the "deadly-handed Clifford," "proud

northern Lord Clifford of Cumberland" (which should, however, have been Westmorland), who slew the Duke of York. In the Third Part hapless young Rutland, son of York, at Wakefield cries in terror, "Ah! tutor, see where bloody Clifford comes," as he approached to avenge his father's death, and presently unarmed and defenceless the youth lay slain under "blackfaced fell Clifford's sword." This dreaded warrior was John, seventh Lord Clifford of Skipton Castle, which had been the proud appanage of the Cliffords for 500 years. The young hope of the Yorkists was but sixteen or seventeen years old, and his murderer only ten years older. This accounts for the reappearance of Clifford in the Third Part of *King Henry VI.*, slain near Towton in 1461, the year after his savage crime at Wakefield. Here he fell not on the battle-field, but slain by a headless arrow shot from behind a bush.

After this battle, which was followed during the next ten years by four more successive defeats of the house of Lancaster, the Cliffords fled, their estates were confiscated, and another lord, Sir William Stanley, reigned in Craven in their stead. Nothing was known or even conjectured of the rightful lord for the next twenty-five years, until the first year of Henry VII. Where could he be? The widow of the black Clifford had married Sir Lancelot Threlkeld, a Cumberland Knight, but of her children by her first marriage nothing was positively known until the King, by reversing the attainder upon the Cliffords, unexpectedly unveiled the mystery; for then there came forth from the wild fells of Cumberland and the lonesome glens of Skiddaw Forest, under the shadow of mighty Blencathra, a man still young, who had only hitherto been known as a well-conducted, rather serious-mannered, thoughtful shepherd, who performed his duties like a good servant, and sat at the lower end of the table in Hall, habited in the humble garb of a Cumberland shepherd. But it was this simple and illiterate hind who was the lawful mighty lord of so many strong castles and great domains in the north, and who had been carefully hidden away in this unfrequented spot by his mother until his thirtieth year, and now was restored to his rightful patrimony.

"For now another day is come,
Fitter hope and nobler doom;

He hath thrown aside his crook,
And hath buried deep his book;
Armour rusting in his halls,
On the blood of Clifford calls."

Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle.

But the blast of the trumpet failed to fire any martial ardour in the breast of this peaceful Clifford. His four immediate predecessors had all died on the field and on the bed of honour; but

"by Heaven's grace this Clifford's heart was framed;
And he, long forced in humble walks to go,
Was softened into feeling, soothed and tamed.
Love had he found in huts where poor men lie;
His daily teachers had been woods and rills,
The silence that is in the starry sky,
The sleep that is among the lonely hills.
In him the savage virtues of the race,
Revenge, and all ferocious thoughts, were dead;
Nor did he change, but kept in lofty place
The wisdom which adversity had bred.
Glad were the vales and every cottage hearth;
The 'shepherd lord' was honoured more and more,
And ages after he was laid in earth,
The 'Good Lord Clifford' was the name he bore."

The rest must be more briefly told. This contemplative shepherd lord withdrew to Barden Tower, the most retired of all his castles and towers, about three miles up the river from Bolton Abbey. Here he made friends with the good prior and monks, and along with them studied to greater advantage than he had been able to study alone on the Cumbrian fells the mysterious sciences of astrology and alchemy. Rarely did he visit London and the Court, where, however, it is recorded that he behaved nobly and wisely. Yet at the age of sixty the ancient wonted fires of the Clifford blood revived in his breast when called upon to resist the incursion of the Scots, and he fought unwounded at Flodden Field, and died in 1523 at the age of seventy.

His later years were darkened by the misconduct of his son Henry, who treated his father with most unfilial disrespect. It is said that this Henry was the hero of the charming ballad of the "Nut-Brown Maid,"

though with no other authority than that of fair conjecture from the lines—

> "Nowe undyrstande, to Westmorland,
> Which is myne herytage,
> I will you brynge," etc.

This young Henry Clifford, with his riotous followers, robbed and plundered his father and many religious houses, now and then riding out (so his father wrote), "both himself and his horse apparelled in cloth of gold and goldsmiths' work, more like unto a duke than a poor baron's son, as he is"—a condition of things not at all improbable after a demoralising civil war and in a state of imperfect civilisation.

But it was this fine young gentleman whom "Royal Harry's" favour advanced to the dignity of an earl with the Garter, and enriched by a grant of the lands belonging to Bolton Priory—a reward, probably, of the tenacity with which the proud baron held out the castle of Skipton against the followers of Robert Aske in the Pilgrimage of Grace. This first Earl of Cumberland died in 1542, at the age of forty-nine.

It is hardly to be expected that very quiet times should follow for noble lords and country gentlemen during the two following reigns of Henry VII. and Henry VIII.; indeed, a peaceable life without hard knocks was not generally considered in the Tudor days to be an enviable lot. Usually they fell out about the deer, and also about the abolition of "the old religion." The Cliffords of Skipton Castle owned many herds of red and fallow deer, which roamed at large, unconfined, over those wild fells, browsing on the black crowberry (*Empetrum nigrum*), which almost covers the Yorkshire moors; and they little brooked the interference of even such powerful gentry as the Nortons, whose land lay enclosed in the midst of the far wider domains of the Cliffords. The deer disdaining all natural boundaries, and there being no walls or fences to keep them within their own bounds, there would naturally arise frequent feuds and fightings between wrathful nobles with large armed retinues at their backs; and now and then there would be a law-suit, in one of which, according to the records preserved, the witness of many old "forsters" or

foresters being taken, one of these men had seen "my old Lady Clifford" (first wife of the Shepherd Lord) "hunt in Rilstone lordship and 'hound' greyhounds, and kill two fat bucks and carry them off." Many mighty huntings done in each other's despite made their pleasure a pretext for many a bloody conflict between these fierce barons.

But a far more serious source of disquietude was the violent changing of the religion of the National Church. The forcible spoliation of all the Abbey lands and revenues, and the sudden cessation of accustomed religious services accompanied with a lofty and magnificent ritual, and the gradual substitution of a simpler, but (as it seemed to most Catholics) a meagre and unimpressive, ceremonial, gave great offence to the Northern lords and their numerous dependents, and in 1540 the Pilgrimage of Grace (as the unhappy rising under Robert Aske was called) was quelled and punished with merciless severity. It was just at this time that the building of the west tower of Bolton Abbey was stopped at the point where we now see it; and soon after, no doubt, the unroofing of chancel and transepts, and the destruction of richly-storied window and of lordly monument, left the graceful structure the empty shell we now behold with such a strange mixture of admiration and of regret. The edifices which men raise endure but a few generations—a few centuries at the most; but ruins last for ever, kind Nature sheltering and adorning them with tenderest care.

In the twelfth year of Queen Elizabeth (in 1569), a second rising against the reformed faith and worship took place—a rash enterprise in which the venerable prior and monks of Bolton Abbey were but too painfully interested. The origin of the story I am about briefly to narrate is told in Wordsworth's lofty poem, the "White Doe of Rylstone;" in "The Rising in the North," in Percy's Reliques; and in Dr. Whitaker's "History of Craven."

Something of romance has the poet woven with magic art in the tissue of his historic narrative; but we shall probably not be deviating very far from historic truth if we follow the tale as he tells it in his musical lines. After the early years of the "spacious times of great Elizabeth," each Sunday, as the bells pealed forth from the low Abbey

tower, the neighbouring inhabitants poured down across the pathless* meadows to worship in the "one protected part—a chapel like a wild bird's nest." There

> "They sing a service which they feel,
> For 'tis the sunrise now of zeal:
> Of a pure faith the vernal prime
> In Great Eliza's golden time."

And while, to the murmuring voice of the flowing river, the solemn liturgy is proceeding, there glides in among the ruins, wandering from the distant fells of Rylstone, a milk-white solitary doe. Softly she paces from bowered niche to prostrate tomb, and then lies still amidst the covert until the congregation rise to return to their homes; and then she too rises, and slowly trots on her lonely way back to the Norton Woods. This was the famous traditional White Doe of Rylstone. At the date above indicated, Richard Norton of Norton Conyers was living, like a great country gentleman, in a strong tower, with spacious pleasure-grounds and terraces embosomed in thick forests, well stocked with game. Grey-haired, but warlike still and valiant, he moved with stately mien in the midst of his natural body-guard of eight stalwart sons, graced by the addition of one lovely daughter, Emily. One fatal day he received a hasty note from Earl Percy of Northumberland, summoning him to a desperate enterprise fraught with the utmost danger. Thomas Percy (seventh Earl of Northumberland) and the Earl of Westmorland, filled with discontent at the refusal of the Queen to compose the differences between herself and Mary Queen of Scots by the marriage of the latter with the Protestant Duke of Norfolk, and, more still, animated with the desire to cause

> "The rites of ancient piety
> To be triumphantly restored
> By the stern justice of the sword,"

had invited Richard Norton to join them in a rising against the Queen's authority. He, a staunch adherent to the old worship, permitting the kindling enthusiasm of religion to stifle the claims of loyalty, arose and

* And they are still pathless.

called on his eight sons to join the enterprise. All obeyed the call save Francis, the eldest, who had embraced the newly received doctrines. He pleaded—

> "A just and gracious queen have we,
> A pure religion, and the claim
> Of peace on our humanity."

Emily had wrought a splendid silken banner, on which were figured a cross and the five wounds of Christ—

> "Full soon to be uplifted high,
> And float in rueful company,"

with the banner of the Dun Bull of Westmorland and the Silver Crescent of Earl Percy. The rest of the story is deeply tragic. The two earls,

> "Grave gentry of estate and name,
> And captains known for worth in arms,"

through profuse hospitality, had but slender means for raising and maintaining an army, and Richard Norton had still less. The old Percy Ballad gives us a picture of Royal Elizabeth painted, we shrewdly suspect, to the very life; for her Majesty's lips were but little used to dropping honeyed words.

> "Her Grace she turned her round about,
> And like a Royall Queene she swore,
> 'I will ordayne them such a breakfast
> As never was in the North before.'"

Her indignant Majesty sent northward a powerful force under the Earl of Sussex, Dudley, Earl of Warwick, and Lord Hunsden, which the ill-advised insurgents dared not stay to face in the field, but dissolved and scattered themselves in all directions. The customary inhuman cruelties followed. Vast numbers were executed by martial law without trial. The fair "North Countree" was made desolate, and the Earl of Northumberland fled into Scotland, was betrayed and imprisoned in Loch Leven Castle, and then carried again to York, where he soon laid his head upon the block.

And the gallant aged lord of Norton Tower and his noble brood of sons, that "fair unrivalled brotherhood," they, too, mingled their blood, not on the battle-field, the warrior's coveted privilege, but, alas!

on one and the same block. One alone, the unarmed Francis, pushing his way across the wilds of Craven with the consecrated banner, fell amidst a horde of outlaws within a day's journey of his deserted home, on the barren spot still called Standard Hill; and poor desolate Emily was left a lonely mourner. From the time that she was laid at rest in the still-used God's Acre of the consecrated ruin, there her favourite, the white doe, paid her weekly visits on the hallowed day, observed, yet unmolested, and regarded with a wondering veneration by the peasantry of Craven. So runs the popular tradition which still survives, its truth respected and acknowledged, a beautiful legend of an olden time in which such olden stories shine like lights in a dark place.

Dr. Whitaker collects a few particulars belonging to this time of the personal habits and expenses of the powerful lords of Skipton and Bolton, out of four MS. folios dated 1606, 1634, 1637, and 1638, which are still carefully kept at Bolton Hall. The establishment at Skipton consisted of thirty-two servants, who cost about £1,000 a year. The chief other expenses were for vast quantities of wine, claret, sack, and muscadine, spirituous liquors not being mentioned. Tobacco was a heavy item, being eighteen shillings a pound. Travelling was very expensive, the young Lord George never riding to Court with fewer than thirty-six gentlemen sumptuously mounted on horseback. A single suit of clothes for Lord Clifford would cost about £200 of our money. Sealskin gloves and "sleeping gloves," no doubt to whiten the hands, are also mentioned, and a black suit of figured satin for "my old lord." The "wardropp" of Skipton Castle is stated in an original roll kept at Bolton Abbey to have been very costly and sumptuous: gowns of black velvet or figured satin, lined with squirrel, a crimson velvet kirtle with hood for a Knight of the Garter, robes of blue velvet with yards of blue silk and gold ribbon tied at the shoulders, to be worn at St. George's feast, with much more of rich apparel of the greatest interest to students of the manners of the seventeenth century. Presents of fish, black game, and wild fowl were constantly made, for which the bearer received generally a gratuity of as much as the game was worth. Stags were sent as presents baked whole. The enormous "stagg pies" were flavoured with currants and lemons. Animal food was extremely

cheap, while such luxuries as sugar "for the sack" were so expensive that two pounds of sugar were equal in value to a fat sheep. Having no newspapers, great families were supplied with news by paid secretaries in London, who regularly furnished their employers with "news-letters" at the charge of about £10 a year.

In the strong and ancient castle of Skipton in Craven, whose walls are nine to twelve feet thick, and the bases of whose seven massive round towers resemble the base of the Eddystone Lighthouse, and fix their broad, tenacious grasp on the solid rock like the British oak—in this historic fortress* hangs a celebrated old family picture, representing, in faded colours, George, third Earl of Cumberland, fourteenth Baron Clifford, and thirteenth Lord of the Honor of Skipton in Craven, Lord Vipont, Baron Vesci, and probably owner of many titles more. This nobleman was one of our famous sea-kings, and served his sovereign gallantly in nine voyages on the high seas in American waters. In his other portrait (still hanging at Bolton Hall) the thin, spare countenance bears some appreciable resemblance to that of the chiefest of our sea-captains—Lord Nelson. His "fair, virtuous, and only lady," the Lady Margaret Russel, daughter of the second Earl of Bedford, stands by his side. Next in order come two sons, who died in early youth; and then, separately framed, the famous Anne herself, Countess of Dorset, Pembroke, and Montgomery, who was born in Skipton Castle in 1590. By the deaths of several noble relatives, vast estates fell into the possession of this great lady; and it must be acknowledged that she managed her large property in a manner becoming not only her great power and wealth, but attesting also her wisdom and the excellence of her heart.

Thirty-eight years of family discord having been brought to a close in 1605† by the death of George, third Earl of Cumberland, the

* Now removed to Appleby.

† "The discord especially raged after the death of Henry the first earl, when the two rival heiresses quarrelled and fought for their inheritance, till the King decided that they should divide it. The whole property had, I think, gone first to George's younger brother Francis, fourth earl, and from him to his son Henry, fifth and last earl. It was at his death that the heiress of the third earl claimed the whole property, and at last obtained half."—*Letter from one of the family to the author.*

Countess Anne entered upon the inheritance of her ancestors. In her youth, though only a slender allowance had been made to her, she had devoted a fourth of it to acts of beneficence. In mature life, "being delivered first from a profligate and then a fanatical husband," she became able fully to indulge in the exercise of the pure religious principles she had inherited from her excellent mother, and was gifted with a long life, which she made illustrious by the display—somewhat ostentatious, perhaps—of her many virtues. According to the interesting notice of her life by Dr. Whitaker, "she had the courage and liberality of the ruder sex, and was endowed with all the devotion, order, and economy of her own, though, perhaps, with not all its softness."

Now free to act, she entered upon her natural element, and set about her great work of restoring her castles, of which six—namely, Skipton, Barden, Brougham, Pendragon, Brough, and Appleby—had been almost destroyed during the civil wars of the Commonwealth, and were now in ruins. Over the principal gateway of each restored castle she set up an inscription stating the name and rank of the restorer, together with the verse (Isaiah lviii. 12), "And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places. Thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations, and thou shalt be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in." "Removing from castle to castle," adds Dr. Whitaker, "she diffused happiness and plenty around her by consuming on the spot the produce of her vast domains in hospitality and charity. Her house was a school for the young and a retreat for the aged, an asylum for the persecuted, a college for the learned, and a pattern to all." Three monuments, erected at her expense, attest her reverence and admiration for Daniel (her tutor in languages), for Michael Drayton, and for Edmund Spenser, the last being in Westminster Abbey.

I quote, merely to dismiss summarily as probably a curious example of literary forgery, the famous laconic letter, once generally believed, and still believed by some, to have been written by her own hand to a Secretary of State of Charles II., who is supposed to have presumed to recommend to her a candidate for her borough of Appleby:—

"I have been bullied by an usurper; I have been neglected by a Court; but I will not be dictated to by a subject. Your man shan't stand.—Ann Dorset Pembroke and Montgomery."

This remarkable document was only *discovered* in 1753, and published in a periodical paper called *The World.* No authority was given as a voucher for its authenticity. The curt style is not the countess's, and the words "bullied" and "stand," in the sense there used, had not yet come into vogue. I fear that the letter can no more stand than could the candidate.

This celebrated lady was buried at Appleby, in a splendid tomb erected by herself; and the inscription records that she was born January 30, 1590; and died March 22, 1675. She was, therefore, not eighty-seven years of age, as stated by Dr. Whitaker, but eighty-five.

On the spot, between Penrith and Brough, where the great countess last parted with her beloved mother, she caused a commemorative pillar to be raised, about twenty feet high, in the rather heavy and ungraceful style of the time, which, being carefully fenced in, is still standing uninjured, and is called the "Countess Pillar." On a slab of stone hard by is still annually distributed the sum of four pounds among the poor of the parish of Brougham, left by the countess for that purpose.

The Bolton Abbey estates came into the possession of the house of Cavendish by marriage. Francis, fourth Earl and younger brother of George, third Earl of Cumberland, was father of Henry, fifth and last Earl, who died in 1697, leaving a daughter, the Lady Elizabeth Clifford, who married Lord Dungarvon, created first Earl of Burlington, whose daughter, the Lady Charlotte Boyle, married in 1720 the Marquis of Hartington, great-grandson of the Earl of Devonshire who was created Duke of Devonshire in 1694. By the marriage of this illustrious statesman (who took an active part in seating the House of Orange on the throne), all the estates of the wealthy Boyle family in Craven came into the possession of the Cavendish family. From him is descended William, the present and seventh Duke of Devonshire, K.G., F.R.S., the noble owner of Bolton Abbey, of princely Chatsworth, and of the more home-like, but not less beautiful, Holker in Cartmel.

PART II.—DESCRIPTIVE.

The Strid—Rev. W. Carr and the Picturesque Rustic Seats—The Loveliness of the Woods in Spring—Subdued Light for Woodland Scenery—Barden Tower—Characteristics of Spring Foliage—The Mountain Ash and above-ground Roots—The Valley of Desolation—The Great Waterspout of 1826—Posforth Gill—Formation of Mountain Streams—Heber's Ghyll—Weathering of Rocks—Bolton Abbey Churchyard—Nature the Beautifier of Ruin and Decay—Lord Frederick Cavendish—The Good Time that *will* come, "though it tarry."

May 27, 1889.—AFTER spending a Sunday in the hospitable old Rectory, and having taken part in the services of the noble church which now fills all the western half of Bolton Abbey, I find myself at this moment sitting on a rounded slab of gritstone by the far-famed Strid. Here the Wharfe, which, says Ruskin, "never could Turner revisit without tears," after having wound its devious way for many miles amongst scenes of that indescribable sylvan and pastoral beauty which is produced by the combination of either moving or sleeping waters with bold and shattered rock, or of green and grassy glades with masses of perpetually varying moorland light and shade, is pent in by huge masses of the hardest rock he has yet pierced in his whole course; and after enjoying his freedom in a breadth of some thirty yards, he has had to force a narrow passage of from ten to only a couple of yards, or even of four feet six, in width. To push the whole of his liquid body through this narrow gorge, when not in flood, costs him a world of pain, and puts him in a great fury, and here he has chafed and roared incessantly for millenniums without succeeding in making for himself a more convenient passage.

Here at my feet, after having tumbled over the slight first fall, and scampered down the rapid slopes, he is now rushing with a deep bass roaring. The greenish, clear brown stream is rippled and corrugated as if corded with swollen muscles, and is crested with a pale yellowish foam. No cliffs confine the narrow chasm, but the huge, smoothly rounded slabs of the mossy rocks glisten and glow with the bright sheen of the emerald and the topaz. The river to-day is unusually shallow, yet the noise and battle-din of the rushing waters are endless. The rock where I am sitting, ten feet above the usual level of the water, has

evidently been covered not long ago by the swollen river to a depth equal to ten feet higher than my seat. Curiously shaped circular hollows, called pot-holes, in parts of the gritstone of less hardness, have been by slow degrees scooped out of the tough rock, that almost defies the chisel, the axe, and the hammer. Lying at the bottom of the pots, which are from three to even eight feet deep, you may see the round boulders and the smooth pebbles whose perpetual grinding and eddying round and round has slowly elaborated these singular holes. Similar pot-holes exist on a much larger scale in the famous so-called glacier garden at Lucerne, with the polished globular boulders, the size of a man's head, still lying at the bottom of them.

At the striding place where young Romilly met his fate, the opposing rocks approach each other within a space of four feet six or five feet. Here the water for ever roars past with a terrible violence almost resembling the sweep of a sabre wielded by some mighty arm. Few venture across, nor is there any inducement to cross except the display of a sure foot and a steady eye. The two stepping places by which the Strid is rather rashly stridden over are easily discerned by the worn appearance of the stone. They do not look inviting, nor do even the life buoys and the long pole hanging near at hand suggest reassuring ideas. The step or stride across must be nicely calculated. Too far is even more dangerous than a little short.

I change my seat. The lord of these pleasant woods has, for the pleasure and refreshment of numerous visitors, placed a seat at every spot where some fresh and lovely prospect opens out, and, therefore, the charming rustic resting places are very numerous. Wherever you find a seat, there you may be sure is a view of more than usual attractiveness. From this spot I see far below me the curving river winding through the green-wood in form like a silver bow with its convex at my feet. To my right it is still wide. To the left it has begun to contract itself into a narrower bed, and is beginning to fume and fret at the prospect of immediate incarceration. The reaches of the river in all directions are bordered by trees, bending gracefully and dipping down their foliage to the very water's edge; not great, park-like trees, but sycamores, ash, beech, elm, and holly. The oaks at

Bolton are not of great size, except one by the road-side near the station, called "Queen Elizabeth."

All are now gay and glittering in all the glory of their May attire, where spring and summer meet: while the rich undergrowth, especially on the opposite or Barden side, is delicately tinted in many places with what looks like wreaths of light blue vapour, with a near resemblance to light clouds of peat smoke wafted by a gentle wind, but consists in reality of great beds of blue hyacinths in their thousands, while here and there one might be picked out of purest white, and admirably contrasted in places with rosy clouds of red campions. Elsewhere it is the forget-me-nots in a faint blue mist which seem to throw a pale reflection of the heavens beneath the heavy foliage of the trees. There again are sweet beds of woodruff, and other beds equally like the stars of heaven for number and for sheen, though far from sweet to the scent, of the *Allium ursinum*, or garlic. And there are modest-looking water-avens meekly bowing down their heads of ruddy velvet. Above, below, before, behind, I seem to see the blessing of God upon His creatures irradiating the ample face of universal nature, insomuch that "they laugh for joy, they also sing," and one understands the fervent poetry of the sweet psalmist of Israel, in whose eyes "the mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs." What beautiful and pleasant places has the God of love provided on this earth, which fallen man has so desecrated!

Though the day is none of the brightest and the sky somewhat threatening, it does not matter; so much the better. English woodland scenery being so exceedingly rich and luxuriant, is none the worse for being viewed under a mild, subdued light, which brings out the contrasts and the harmonies of colour and shade better than a bright and garish sunshine.

Once more I change my position. I am now on the Barden or right bank of the river, at a fair elevation, but not yet out of the wood. We sit in an arbour, rudely and strongly built of oak, commanding a distant view of the ruins of Barden Tower, rising from among the woods, the chosen residence of the "good Lord Clifford," and of his descendant the great countess Ann, whose tiny little clogs (probably

worn in her girlhood) I have just been shown at the hall, together with a straw bonnet of the Duchess of Devonshire,* not at all like the famous Gainsborough. A portrait of the countess, in the same house, shows her, by her firm and compressed lips, to have certainly been a stern woman, accustomed to command, who would be able to say, with unanswerable energy, "Your man shan't stand!" Barden Tower has fallen into ruins, not by the brunt of war, but simply by disuse and neglect, and by having been long abused as a handy quarry of ready-hewn stones, and a wood-house for firewood and shaped timber by neighbouring builders—a felonious act overlooked then, but never permitted now. This arbour, like every other seat (placed by a former rector, the good William Carr, by the permission of the Duke), commands also a magnificent reach of the river, where I can see the trout, and his cousin the grayling, leaping together. And I see beneath me and before me, across the river, the soft and tender golden-greens of the budding oak, and the bluish shade of the full-leaved sycamore, and the still half-naked, upturned ends of the ash-boughs, all refreshed and shining like jewels in the sun after the small and gentle rain, which has been falling with little intermission.†

Lower down we meet with a curiosity. A tall and slender young mountain-ash rises straight up from the centre of the rounded top of a mossy boulder, which it clasps with four claws, which root into the soil and furnish the tree with a fourfold root above ground. This is a great and inexplicable puzzle. The bark has been much disfigured by names cut into it, but is now protected by a stout paling.

May 29.—The long and winding gill called "The Valley of Desolation" supplies the combination which is often felt welcome after beauty in too great profusion. The effect is the same as that of the timely and artful discord sometimes introduced to give prominence to the harmonies of a finished composition. Browning (adopting, perhaps, the idea of Wagner) asks, "Why rushed the discord in, but that harmony should be praised?"

In the year 1826 a fearful storm raged over the valley of the

* This is the story as it is told by the housekeeper, but unauthorised by the family.

† The annual rainfall here is only 29 inches.

Wharfe, and a great waterspout travelled slowly down the Posforth Gill, accompanied with thunder and lightning, twisting and wrenching huge branches off the oaks, and in some cases entirely stripping a mighty monarch of the forest, and leaving nothing but a gaunt and blackened carcase standing. The ravages of that great storm are still apparent in the strange sight of a number of what were once stalwart trees in the path of the destroyer, and now are struggling between life and death. The whole moor is bleak and inhospitable in the extreme, except down in the gill, where the stream (which has at times raged with the utmost fury) is now at least, with its beautiful waterfall, a scene of the greatest woodland beauty. Not many people there seem to be able to account for the existence in one spot of such a number of blackened, blasted trees, so soon does the memory of a remarkable event in some cases pass away. The cause I have described is that stated by the noble owner, who has many undoubted claims besides his scientific knowledge to be an authority.

All down the gill vast blocks of boulders lie about in confusion. It might be thought that so insignificant a stream as this, and much more that of Heber's Ghyll, near Ilkley, would be totally inadequate to produce such results. But once or twice in a century comes a tremendous storm, when huge stones are rolled down off the moors, and hurled further down by the powerful torrents, to be deposited in the swollen and expanded bed of the stream. Intense frosts and more destructive thaws, occurring at distant intervals, break up ponderous pillars of stone into slabs, and split them up with incredible force; and I happen just recently to have noticed in my own parish a bare flat surface of slaty rock, four feet across, freshly trisected by some force, which could only have been that of frost.

Again, a thin and rapid mountain rill passing, in various moods, over a sloping moorland surface (as at Heber's Ghyll) will, in the process of the ages, wear down the hardest millstone-grit, dividing it into vast blocks, which have all the appearance of having been swept down from above by some irresistible torrent, but have, in fact, lain there in the same spot, to be slowly carved out into those shapeless blocks, which have been knocked about and hurled against each other

in great floods, but not transported to any distance. Kind, artistic, picturesque Nature covers the more sheltered blocks with moss and ferns, and borders the stream with water-loving shrubs and trees; and so we get most of our beautiful ravines and mountain gills.

Such processes are repeated century after century during geological ages, to which historic periods are as nothing. The mere chemical effect of the atmospheric weathering on fixed rocks assists in working out these varying aspects of nature; and these slow and sure, these rare and remote changes, account for much, if not all, of the strange combination of craggy and woodland scenery which constitutes the principal charm of the valley of the Wharfe and of the Yorkshire moors.

Thus have we wandered on from one beautiful, interesting scene to another, consecrated some to the sylvan pride of sweet and rural loveliness which enshrines in an aureole of glory so many of the stately ancestral homes of England, and some to scenes rendered memorable by the piety of our forefathers, or the valour and the worth of the ancestors of our old English aristocracy.

Can we more fitly conclude our pilgrimage than on the ancient hallowed soil where the feet of so many generations have trod in silent reverence over the ashes of the dead from Alfred to Victoria?

Where Art and Science fail, the loving God of Nature interposes and spreads a tender beauty over the ruined works of men. The dry stone fences, the crumbling mortared wall, are in time overspread with the delicate drapery of the wall-pellitory, the golden bloom of the wallflower, the snapdragon, the pink, and scores more of the native vestments which are everywhere provided to adorn decay and conceal ruin. Soft green cushions of moss display their full and graceful curves on dry stone fences, and silver-grey lichens and red or orange mould invest the rocks and the boulders, as well as the ancient standing walls, with a venerable glory, of which only the absence can enable us to understand all the loveliness.

Here in the consecrated pile which crowns the scene with its silent, solemn grandeur, here within hearing of the rushing of the water through the far-famed stepping-stones, here where the noiseless feet of the milk-white doe padded on the hallowed turf, the Romillys, the Cliffords,

the Nortons, and the Cavendishes have worshipped from generation to generation; and here rest in peace until the coming of the Son of Man in glory the mortal remains of friar and monk, of prince and peasant.

And here in this sweet and most peaceful spot, where sternness and power blend with the sweet peace of tender decay, here for ages and generations to come will the moistened eye dwell with deep and reverent emotion on the solemnly beautiful memorial of one distinguished amongst so many of the loved and honoured. We are gazing upon the memorial, a lovely white runic cross, raised here in the Dale of Wharfe, to one whose mortal remains lie resting in peace at Edensor, hard by the princely palace of the Peak. To Lord Frederick Cavendish, the beloved son of the noble Duke whose honoured life is still prolonged among us, stands nobly lifting up its head to the height of seventeen feet among the humbler memorials of the dalesmen, a pure white free-stone runic cross with the following inscription:—

"To the beloved memory of Lord Frederick Charles Cavendish, son of William, 7th Duke of Devonshire, and of Blanche Georgiana, his wife. Born November 30th, 1836. He went out as Chief Secretary to Ireland, 'Full of love to that country, full of hope for her future, full of capacity to render her service,' and was murdered in the Phœnix Park, Dublin, within twelve hours of his arrival, May 6th, 1882. 'The Lord grant thee thy heart's desire, and fulfil all thy mind.'"

Another memorial, a bronze statue, at Barrow-in-Furness, bears the following lines:—

"Love thyself last; cherish those hearts that hate thee,
"Still in thy right hand carry gentle peace
"To silence envious tongues. Be just and fear not.
"Let all the ends thou aim'st at be thy country's,
"Thy God's, and truth's. Then if thou fall'st
"Thou fall'st a blessed martyr."

In Edensor churchyard Lord Frederick was interred in a grave of the utmost simplicity. On a beautiful tablet in the church after the name and dates is inscribed—

"Blessed are the peace makers: for they shall be called the children of God."
"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

And on the fine table tomb in Cartmel Priory Church, under the recumbent figure in white marble, are the words :—

"Died in the service of his country and the defence of his friend."

"Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in His Holy Place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart."

Many of the house of Cavendish have given the service or the sacrifice of their lives to their King, their country, and their God. Many have fallen nobly, covered with all the glory that earth can give. To Frederick Cavendish belongs as high and worthy a distinction as any that the best and noblest of the court and camp of Queen Victoria's reign can desire, the glory of having fallen a herald of peace, the defender of his land against disorder and sedition, the noble champion and forerunner of a happier time that is yet to come, and will come. "For the vision is yet for the appointed time, and it hasteth toward the end, and shall not lie. Though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not delay."

1889.

Wordsworth's "Westmorland Girl."

WORDSWORTH'S "WESTMORLAND GIRL."

Broughton-in-Furness and the Duddon—Sarah Mackereth, "The Westmorland Girl"—Her Beauty and Refinement—Fading Away—Unexpected Discovery that she was Wordsworth's Heroine, his "Lamb Deliverer"—Story of the Deliverance of the Lamb from Drowning—The Scene by Grasmere Lake—Primitive Times at Grasmere—Sarah Tolling the Passing Bell—Sarah "loved all things great and small"—Nathaniel Hawthorne at Grasmere—Passing away—Visited by Angels—Laid at rest in Broughton Churchyard—Human Interest needed for the True Enjoyment of Beautiful Scenery.

ABOUT the month of February, 1872, I received information that a woman in my parish of the humbler class was in a very weak and suffering state. The distance from the vicarage was but five minutes' walk, and I was soon in her neat little cottage. Sarah Davies was but a new-comer into the parish. Her husband had obtained agricultural employment, and he and his wife and two little girls had been settled but a few weeks in a cottage commanding a lovely view, bordering on the Lake country, if not actually part of it. The cottage stood on a gentle elevation. Beneath lay the wide and level estuary of the Duddon, which here spreads into the broad expanse known as the Duddon Sands. Northward appears the opening between the two rocky fells of Bleansley Bank and Stoneside into the richly-wooded, verdure-clad valley of the Duddon, *our* great poet's "Duddon, long-loved Duddon, child of the clouds." To the right, nestling and embosomed between low hills, lies, compact and close, the little whitewashed and slate-roofed town of Broughton-in-Furness, with its quaint old church—some of it older than Furness Abbey—standing amidst green meadows apart from the town, and the single line of railway sweeping past, till lost in the deep rock cutting, which is crowned by the ancient battlements of Broughton Tower. That noble mountain, Black Combe, rises conspicuously before us over the Duddon Sands at no greater distance than six or seven miles, its gentle slopes and long, sweeping

sides contrasting finely with the dark and rugged hollow that descends —steep, frowning, and inaccessible—from its majestic summit, and from which it appears to derive its name of Black Combe,* which connects it with the Welsh Cwms. Another huge mountain mass rises almost in the same line with Black Combe, at a distance from it of some twelve



RYDAL MOUNT.

or thirteen miles in the south-west, Broughton lying nearly between the two. This is Coniston Old Man, with its brother heights, the Dow Crags and Walna Scar, or White Pike. The view is bounded at the farthest south by the sea, and by the puffing chimney-stalks of Barrow and Askam, and the busy furnaces of Millom, where Hodbarrow fuses its mineral wealth; to the north, with a fine contrast, Sarah might daily fix her eyes, with a last lingering, fond gaze, upon her native mountains of Rydal Head, Fairfield, and Kirkstone, rising pale blue in the distance

* "Or Black Combe (dread name,
Derived from clouds and storms)."

from between the heights that encircle lovely Coniston and Windermere. But external nature, with all her charms, can only occupy the mind in its leisure hours of quiet peace and meditation. The visitor of the sick leaves these thoughts at the door when he enters the sick chamber.

Sarah was a rather tall woman, past her thirty-seventh year, possessing features of singular delicacy and refinement—quite enough, indeed, to entitle her to be described as beautiful—even very beautiful. Dark hair of raven blackness, always smoothed and parted with the most perfect neatness, shaded a face now transparently thin, pale, and delicate, but once evidently bright with joy and love and animation; eyes deep and dark, with all a wife's and a mother's beaming softness when she spoke of those who were so dear to her, and from whom she knew well she would soon be called to part for this life. I cannot resist speaking of the singular beauty and refinement of that countenance, chiefly because it reflected the purity and the charity of the heart within.

I generally found her lying, in her snow-white garments, in a room where all was of the same snowy whiteness in its perfect cleanliness. Fair flowers stood in the window; the air of the room was always sweet and pure. Consumption was rapidly wasting her frame away; and a babe was born of her who seemed as if her own life was to be counted by days rather than by weeks. But the quiet confidence of her soul in the peace that trust in Jesus alone can give was never once disturbed during her long and severe trial. In her wonderful calmness and patience she yet asked, "Was she patient?" "Did we think she was impatient?" No, indeed; it was evident that Jesus was her stay in the darkest hour.

How full of the truest hope and consolation is this knowledge, which we gain from experience of the death-beds of those who die in the Lord, that when earth is fading away, its ties loosening day by day, and weakness prostrates the body wholly and the mind in part, yet *then* is felt, with a reality which nothing earthly can equal, that God is supporting our failing strength; that He gives us to see what mortal eyes in the bustle and business of life can only faintly discern; that the

Redeemer then seems to be whispering to our innermost heart: "Fear not, for I am with thee; I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee. When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour."

Of my interviews with Sarah I have no long and interesting conversations to record. It is very rarely, if ever, that in cottage life one meets with piety that is able to express its feelings in many words. For the most part, our intercourse consisted of quiet conversations, in which I bore, indeed, the principal part, but for which she supplied the matter by words, few but full of feeling. Especially, she would frequently assure me of her happiness in leaving *all* to her Heavenly Father, and her dark eyes would then light up with a more than earthly radiance.

Once we were talking of Grasmere, her native place, when, turning her head quickly towards me, she said, "Did you know Mr. Wordsworth, sir?" I told her that I had only seen him two or three times, but had never spoken to him, and was not acquainted with him. "I knew him very well, sir," she added; "he was a very nice and kind old gentleman, with white hair, and he used to pat me on the head. He wrote a poem about me." "Indeed," said I; "and what is the poem called?" "It is called 'The Westmorland Girl,'" she replied, "and it was about my getting a lamb out of a beck." And, as she spoke, her pale, delicate features lighted up with enthusiasm at the remembrance.

There had been a heavy fall of rain, she said; the streams were greatly swollen. A distressed and forsaken lamb had been left on one side of this dividing torrent by its mother, which had strayed away across it. Trying to follow, it had fallen in, and immediately the hungry waves whirled the poor creature away, and tumbling it over loose stones, and tossing it from bank to bank, would soon have carried it, drowned, into the lake had not little Sarah Mackereth, then only nine years old, plunged boldly in and caught the poor lamb in her little arms. "We were rolled over and over," said she (suiting the action

to the word by making her arms to revolve rapidly round each other; "but I got it safely out at last." I asked her if she was not frightened and hurt; but she laughed in her quiet, cheerful way, and said, "Not at all; and my clothes were soon dry again."

The poem in which Wordsworth commemorated this act is not so well known as many others of the poet's works. It was one of his latest productions, when many collected editions of his works had already been published, and is found in Moxon's Popular Edition (1869):—

"Let who will delight in fable,
I shall tell you truth. A lamb
Leapt from this steep bank to follow
'Cross the brook its thoughtless dam.

"Far and wide, on hill and valley,
Rain had fallen, unceasing rain,
And the bleating mother's young one
Struggled with the flood in vain:

"But, as chanced, a cottage maiden
(Ten years scarcely had she told)
Seeing, plunged into the torrent,
Clasped the lamb and kept her hold.

"Whirled adown the rocky channel,
Sinking, rising, on they go,
Peace and rest, as seems, before them
Only in the lake below.

"Oh! it was a frightful current
Whose fierce wrath the girl had braved;
Clap your hands with joy, my hearers,
Shout in triumph; both are saved."

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A few days ago I visited the scene of this courageous deed. The Mackereths' cottage is called the Wyke Cottage; it stands on the north side of the road that leads from Grasmere to Langdale, about half a mile from the church. It is a very small, stone-built cottage, with one of those round chimneys which form such a pretty feature of the houses in that district. A tall yew and a Scotch fir rise very high above it.

Behind rise the shining steeps of Silver How, from which, down a rocky fell, rich in underwood and ferns and flowers, rushes the noisy and impetuous torrent which had so nearly carried into the lake our little Westmorland maiden. The stream is not wide, but, when full, it is deep, and full of rugged boulders. Here dwelt the Mackereths—parish clerks for some generations; but, at an earlier period, one or more of them were "priests." This is the name still given to the clergyman in these parts by most of the old people; it is doubtless a relic of pre-Reformation times. In those earlier days, in the Lake district, when a vacancy fell in a living, a successor was not fetched from some unknown distance; some grave and clerkly man from the same dale would serve their turn, who laboured both as minister and schoolmaster, perhaps all in one building—the parish church. Such was the origin of Robert Walker, so well known as "Wonderful Walker,"* for sixty years minister of Seathwaite Chapel and parish schoolmaster, and very frequently a day-labourer, working for hire for his own parishioners. He was born in the little cottage-farm of Undercrag, in his own Seathwaite, which is the next parish to the north of this parish of Broughton-in-Furness. It has been remarked to me, by those who have long known them, that there has always been a certain refinement, a superior nature, that has distinguished the members of the Mackereth family. They may be truly called "the gentry of the soil"—noble examples of simple and pure native excellence, owing little to education, little to intercourse with those who move in the higher ranks of life. They retain the rustic simplicity, they practise the untutored and artless courtesy which we love to imagine, but do not often discover, in the English peasant life.

Little Sarah early lost her mother. To her worthy father she was most devoted. Her love for him was deep and intense. No labour was too great to lighten her dear father's toils, or relieve him from attendance upon such of his duties as she was able to fulfil. Thus, many a time she tolled the church bell for her father; and, at the request of an aged gentleman of Grasmere, after his death she tolled the passing bell every day for him until his body was committed to the grave. This was a service in excess of what he had asked, for he had only requested

* See the next paper, "Wordsworth and the Duddon."

her to toll the bell on the day of his funeral; but her zeal led her to do more. This circumstance is referred to in the second part of the poem.

One other occurrence is mentioned. So great was her feeling for all living creatures, that she would never endure to see them made to suffer unnecessarily. A gentleman was fishing in Grasmere Lake. Our little maiden stood by watching or helping. He does not seem to have gained her confidence, for, having caught a large pike, and cruelly thrusting a stick repeatedly down its throat with a wicked pleasure in its writhing and agony, the brave little creature, with indignation kindling in her lovely countenance, snatched it from him, and flung it far away into the lake, fearless of his anger, careless of the consequences.

These little traits of character, the historical accuracy of which I vouch for on the authority of those who knew and loved well the bard and his "little lamb-deliverer," are embodied in the second part of the poem, of which the following are the concluding verses :—

"Listen yet awhile ;—with patience
Hear the homely truths I tell ;
She in Grasmere's old church steeple
Tolled this day the passing bell.

"Yes, the wild girl of the mountains
To their echoes gave the sound,
Notice punctual as the minute,
Warning solemn and profound.

"She, fulfilling her sire's office,
Rang alone the far-heard knell—
Tribute, by her hand, in sorrow,
Paid to one who loved her well.

"When his spirit was departed,
On that service she went forth ;
Nor will fail the like to render
When his corse is laid in earth.

"What then wants the child to temper
In her breast unruly fire,
To control the froward impulse,
And restrain the vague desire?

"Early a pious training,
And a steadfast outward power,
Would supplant the weeds, and cherish
In their stead each opening flower.

"Thus the fearless lamb-deliverer,
Woman-grown, meek-hearted, sage,
May become a blest example
For her sex of every age.

"Watchful as a wheeling eagle,
Constant as a soaring lark,
Should the country need a heroine,
She might prove our Maid of Arc.

"Leave that thought; and here be uttered
Prayer that grace Divine may raise
Her humane, courageous spirit
Up to heaven, through peaceful ways."

In Nathaniel Hawthorne's "English Note-Book" we find that he met at Grasmere Church with one of the Mackereths, and heard about the poem without being able to call the circumstances of it to mind. I do not doubt that if he had known more about it, we should have some entertaining gossip on the subject. The following is his account in 1855:—

"I have been again to see Wordsworth's grave, and, finding the door of the church open, we went in. A woman and little girl were sweeping at the farther end, and the woman came towards us out of the cloud of dust which she had raised. . . . She was a very intelligent-looking person, not of the usual English ruddiness, but rather thin and somewhat pale, though bright of aspect. Her way of talking was very agreeable. She inquired if we wished to see Wordsworth's monument, and at once showed it to us—a slab of white marble fixed against the upper end of the centre row of stone arches, with a pretty long inscription, and a profile bust, in bas-relief, of his aged countenance. . . . The woman said that she had known him very well, and that he had made some verses on a sister of hers. She repeated the first lines—*something about a lamb*—but neither S—— nor I remembered them."

I read the poem to her and her husband one calm summer evening.

He had never heard it; she, I think, not more than once. Her placid gaze rested on her husband's countenance, to see how it would affect him; for she loved him faithfully. He was "not one of those rough, wicked men," she once said to me.

I feel the more pleasure in bringing this touching poem before a wider circle of thoughtful readers, because it furnishes, as I think, an illustration of a fact grateful to the Christian—that Wordsworth, in the latter years of his calm, happy, and peaceful life, enjoyed more deeply than in early and middle life the blessedness and peace of a closer walk with God. Witness, for instance, the solemn stillness and the deep faith in all Divine things that breathes through the "Evening Voluntaries." Not that at any time his faith and confidence were in any danger of becoming loosed from their moorings, but that in him peculiarly the mellowing flow of years brought with it a surer trust, a deeper realisation of the blessedness of a soul at peace with God, through the Redeemer's merits; so that his peaceful old age was like to what we sometimes witness in the lovely evenings which shed such a richness of glory over his beloved vales—a sunset without a cloud.

Such, too, was Sarah Davies's departure. The difference between her entrance upon a better world and his consisted in nothing more than the mere power of expression. In her, no less than in the poet, there was patience under suffering, mingled with joy at the prospect of release from the flesh and heaven opening. Both knew and felt equally the noble declaration of faith and immortality: "When Thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, Thou didst open the kingdom of heaven to all believers." But poor Sarah could only look her firm belief with her eyes, and express it in words few and simple, though strong with all the fulness of her heart.

Before me hangs still the set of hymns for the sick and suffering which I had hung by her bedside, and every day the hymn for that day was placed before her. It lies open at xxix., and she died on the 1st September. She read them, therefore, up to the last day that she was able. Great comfort did she receive from these well-chosen hymns.

She received at my hands the Holy Communion, with her husband. There was in her countenance a sweet and holy calm that recalled none of her early animation. It was the rich, deep glow of heavenly light that kindles in the face of the true believer, and marks unmistakably to the minister of God that here is one sealed for heaven, saved and redeemed from the power of the grave. What proved to be my last interview with this dear child of God, I did not think would be my last. Some clerical business took me to Carlisle, and in my absence she passed gently away—the gentle, loving spirit returned to Him that gave it.

On her last day upon earth her sister entered the room. Sarah said, "Did Davies tell you?" "Tell me what?" "Did he really not tell you? It is very strange. Well, I have seen angels. They came to fetch me. I saw them plainly; I could not be mistaken." Blessed spirit of the departed, thou knowest now whether it were indeed a vision from heaven!

Sarah sleeps in the quiet churchyard of Broughton-in-Furness. The mountains of her native land look down from afar upon her resting-place; the distant murmur of Duddon may often be heard in deeper contrast to the stillness of the scene. The prayer of the Christian poet has been heard. His spirit seemed to her minister to mingle with his own as he bent over her fair but fading countenance in fervent prayer and thanksgiving. The wayward but brave and loving girl had grown to womanhood. The country had not called to her for aid, or she would not have been wanting at its call. No Joan of Arc was she, but one whom it was always a joy and a comfort to see—a crown to her husband, the glory of her children. "Her children shall arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her."

Tourists will flock still to Grasmere to stay, or to pass that fairest gem of English scenery, and be delighted, as every one must be who has the faintest touch of a feeling of love and admiration for the lovely creation of God; and many, starting in their walk, with elastic tread and chest expanding with the conscious glow of strength and spirits, for Elterwater, Langdale, or Coniston, will leave behind that

humblest little cottage sheltered at the foot of Silver How; and will they not now, perhaps, bestow a passing thought on the child that dwelt in that lowly cot, whose grace and courage won for her a prouder and more lasting distinction far than could have been conferred by medals and ribands? After all, there is nothing like a little human interest to impart an added charm to natural scenery. You pass through Grasmere, Rydal, Ambleside, and you speak to none but landlords and landladies, waiters and chambermaids, and you lose the first element that brings you akin to the place and attaches you to it lastingly. It is not in these sweet vales as in the islands of the south, where the "spicy breezes blow,"—

> "Where every prospect pleases,
> And only man is vile."

Although our dalespeople may not now be distinguished by all the primitive simplicity in which the first educated and polished settlers found them some seventy years ago, yet there is still, for all who love quiet and simple worth, abundance of the true metal still to reward him who seeks for it in the spirit of "charity out of a pure heart."

1872.

Wordsworth and the Duddon.

WORDSWORTH AND THE DUDDON.

Duddon Sonnets—A Two Days' solitary Visit to the Duddon Valley in September, 1882—Seathwaite Tarn—Birks Brigg and Gowdrel Dub—Glittering Transparency of the Water—Cockley Beck—Division of the Valley—Hardknot and Wrynose—Wild Deer—Three Shire Stones—Source of the Duddon—Dioptrics of a running Brook—Varieties of Effects in a Mountainous Country—Coming down to the Pastures and the Farms—Seathwaite Church—Rev. Robert Walker "The Wonderful"—Original Information—Stepping-Stones—Wallabarrow Crag—The Red Felsite Dike—Ulpha Kirk—Dunnerdale Fells—Duddon Woods—Duddon Hall—Rowfold Bridge—Flowering Plants and Ferns—Buckbarrow Volcanic Crags—If England were subject to Volcanic Eruptions?—Glacier Polished Rocks—A Day with Ruskin at the Weathered Rocks of Goat's Water—Ruskin's Confession of Faith in Christianity in "Præterita"—Duddon Bridge and Duddon Sands.

SEATED beside a rugged, shattered, and confused mass of rock crowning the high ridge that overlooks Birks Farm and Birks Bridge, the rich hues of advancing autumn throwing golden reflections upon the green patches of verdure that spread a glory over fell and valley, I here command a first view of the glowing scenery of the "Duddon Sonnets," consecrated by the genius of Wordsworth, one of the three or four truly great poets to whom England has given birth.

Here I have chosen to commence my lonely contemplative visit to the higher Duddon Valley, descending into it exactly opposite the point from which Wordsworth himself recommended an entrance into the valley as the loveliest of all, at the descent from Seathwaite Tarn.

From my elevated vantage-ground, as I look north, the eye rests on the dreary wastes of Wrynose, which the dalespeople call Wreyness, extending far away towards the distant source of the Duddon. To my left the golden browns and the yet unfaded greens mingle harmoniously upon the nearer fell-side, and there above comes tumbling down in a silvery broken stream of flashing light the beck that issues from Seathwaite Tarn with a roar which I can hear at a distance of half a mile; while Grey Friars, the Old Man, the Dow Crags, and Walna Scar stretch in broken continuity from the north-east to the south. At my left is

the scarped and craggy ridge of Harter Fell, roughly terraced with rugged slopes broken with patches of brightest verdure, on which those active mountaineers, the Herdwick sheep, are quietly browsing.

Below, the sweet green valley lies soberly gay with the soft, subdued shining of a sun that struggles to get free from the clouds of silvery grey, and there winds, with many a devious reach, the vocal stream of Duddon. Just below lies the peaceful farm called Birks, where I know I shall presently receive a kindly welcome before I visit the far-famed Birks Brigg and Gowdrel Dub, which, being very near, I propose, though down stream, to visit at the same time with Birks Brigg before I proceed farther north. And now

> "I seek the birthplace of a native stream—
> All hail, ye mountains! hail, thou morning light!
> Better to breathe at large on this clear height
> Than toil in heedless sleep from dream to dream:
> Pure flow the verse, pure, vigorous, free, and bright,
> For Duddon, long-loved Duddon, is my theme!"

From the plain little old farmhouse you descend through green pastures to the swamp, when suddenly, as you approach the river, which has been coming down the dale so far leisurely enough, and in a commonplace way, you become aware of a sudden change. From sedgy banks varied with the aromatic bog-myrtle, the golden bog-asphodel, now out of flower, the rosy red-rattle, and the milk-white green-veined parnassia, the river plunges in haste among wavé-washed rocks and boulders, scooped into fantastic shapes, whitened with the weather and the water, then passes on for a few yards through a deep, dark chasm between perpendicular rocks, cleft with gloomy fissures, deeper and deeper, narrower and more narrow, not, at any rate to-day, without hurry to a black pit some twenty feet deep, spanned aloft by one narrow arch; and here an exclamation of surprise spontaneously bursts forth even from a solitary wanderer as he gazes down with astonishment into the intense transparency of the emerald green of that pellucid pool, where now the water lags lazily along, only indicating the sluggishness of its movement by the gentle wafting of small discs of white foam brought from the fall close by. Whence this dazzling and most

marvellous glassy greenness, reminding one of the blue beryl-like transparency of the deep mill-pond on the chalk in Arundel Park? The polished slabs of rock that line the bottom, and would no doubt be white if laid on the land, lie below as green as the emerald cushions of moss that make gay the trickling rocks above. Perhaps none can accurately explain the physical cause.

This is Wordsworth's Faëry chasm :—

> "Abodes of naiads, calm abysses pure,
> Bright liquid mansions, fashioned to endure
> When the broad oak drops, a leafless skeleton,
> And the solidities of mortal pride,
> Palace and tower, are crumbled into dust!"

Peering rather perilously over the edge, the deafening roar of the torrent causing an involuntary tremor, I see the lofty crags riven with deep, dark fissures, where neither moss nor humblest fern can grow; buttress succeeding buttress, some like the fair white flying buttresses of Gloucester Cathedral, all curved and hollowed out by the foaming torrents into a hundred weird, fantastic shapes. Here one starts at the unexpected sight of a colossal foot and leg of stone, from the knee downwards, dipping suspended in the stream, formed by the wearing away of the rock of volcanic ash. The resemblance is wonderful, making it an object of curiosity to both dalesfolk and visitors.

Charming contrast! Through the arch I see the clear, transparent, glassy pool kissed by the nodding alders, and kindled into life by the fiery red of a low mountain-ash in all her autumn bravery.

There are very strange freaks of rockwork down this part of Duddon. Here is a huge and exactly square column of stone forty feet high, leaning unattached against the ferny bank, ten feet of it rising above the ground. It is cleft straight halfway down the middle with a clean fissure, with corresponding sides, as if the fracture had been a sudden one. The opposite bank is grand with vertical rocks richly clothed with verdure. But the lover of Nature who wants to hunt out these hidden beauties must leave the valley road and roam and climb at liberty.

A very little way farther down the stream, just opposite Troutal, is

Gowdrel Dub. Dub means a silent pool beloved of silvery salmon, but Gowdrel is not, as some suppose, the golden rill, for nowhere in Furness is a stream of water ever called a rill, but a beck, the same as the German *bach*. Gowdrel is the name of the rough pasture that lies before it. Down comes hither the stripling Duddon in a tremendous hurry through his deep worn channel, as though he thought it was high time to be moving on after sleeping so long in Birks Dub; and so he sweeps on by vast square blocks that have fallen from the opposite cliff, where you may easily see the corresponding cavities, past rugged boulders and nodding sedges, past rushy banks and masses of ash, and dwarf oak, and birch, when suddenly down he comes again with a heavy fall, "like a broken purpose," into a dark and deeply ramparted pool, where at once he goes to sleep, the water apparently ceasing to move, the soft, green, liquid transparency reappearing, as of late, in the limpid waters, and the bottom lined with smooth and polished rocks of lucid green, like the emerald banks. For a sweet little bit of gemlike mountain scenery, Gowdrel Dub is unsurpassable. See it if you can alone, or if with a friend, agree to leave behind all talk of business and the noisy, whirling world. Such converse here is out of place and against the grain. Here are sweet sprigs of purple heather at my feet that have rejoiced no eyes but those of a wandering vicar.

> "Sole listener, Duddon! to the breeze that played
> With thy dear voice, I caught the fitful sound
> Wafted o'er sullen moss and craggy mound,—
> Unfruitful solitudes, that seemed to upbraid
> The sun in heaven!—but now, to form a shade
> For Thee, green alders have together wound
> Their foliage; ashes flung their arms around;
> And birch-trees risen in silver colonnade."

So the heather sprigs have bloomed for me. May they not have bloomed in vain! Some days we live that do the work of years; some hours there are that tinge a life. It is not given to every one to reap life-long enjoyment from the mere sight of a field of daffodils dancing in the sunlight; but what is Wordsworth's moral?

> "For oft when on my couch I lie
> In vacant or in pensive mood,

They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude,
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils."

This September sky supplies the most perfect light for the dale. The atmosphere seems refined into a crystalline clearness and purity; the colouring is richer, tenderer, and more sweetly blended and harmonised. The bright green pastures are softly dappled over with shadows dropped from gently moving clouds; shadows that lie long in spots fixed and unmoved, with steady beams of quiet pleasant sunshine interposed. The glancing torrents *scaur* the mountain sides with streaks of glistening sheen. Here the isolated rock called Castle How looms dark and frowning, there the sweet pastures smile bright with the autumn after-grass; and amidst them all glide the "trotting brooks" and chattering becks, and the babbling and brawling companion of my walk, the young Duddon ever running by my side and ever telling me of his busily-idle, never-ending life, and flashing merrily back the rays of sunlight that so liberally steep his waves in gems of purest light. Wordsworth observes that the influence of this season in the dale of the Duddon is, that in it "the imagination, by the aid of natural scenery, is carried into recesses of feeling otherwise unattainable."

Farther up the valley, opposite Dalehead, and below Black Hall, are stepping-stones; but these are not the poet's far-famed stepping-stones; we shall cross these much lower down, below Seathwaite.

But here is Cockley Beck at last, Lancashire's Ultima Thule, the last vestige of human habitation for a very long way to come; for here the dale divides, and the lonely farm stands at the meeting of three mountain roads.

Here I have said the road divides right and left. The rough road to the left will take you over Hardknot Pass into verdant smiling Eskdale. "Hardknot Castle," a shapeless and barely distinguishable ruin, may be discerned by a careful eye crowning the height on the right hand.

"Fallen, and diffused into a shapeless heap,
Or quietly self-buried in earth's mould,

Is that embattled House, whose massy keep
Flung from yon cliff a shadow large and cold.
There dwelt the gay, the beautiful, the bold,
Till mighty lamentations, like the sweep
Of winds—though winds were silent—struck a deep
And lasting terror through that ancient Hold.
Its line of warriors fled;—they shrunk when tried
By ghostly power;—but Time's unsparing hand
Hath plucked such foes, like weeds, from out the land;
And now, if men with men in peace abide,
All other strength the weakest may withstand,
All worse assaults may safely be defied."

Here, at Cockley Beck, I shall find hospitable quarters for the night, with the perfection of homely rustic simplicity; and while my simple supper is preparing, I stroll in the softened light of the declining sun up the dreary, treeless valley whence the Duddon, "child of the clouds," derives its birth.

"To chant thy birth, thou hast
No meaner poet than the whistling blast,
And Desolation is thy patron saint!
She guards thee, ruthless power! who would not spare
Those mighty forests, once the bison's screen,
Where stalked the huge deer to his shaggy lair
Through paths and alleys roofed with darkest green,
Thousands of years before the silent air
Was pierced by whizzing shaft of hunter keen!"

Grandly antlered heads of these noble extinct animals are often found in the sands of the estuary, sometimes in quantities together. On Bleansley Bank, near Broughton, are ancient square enclosures, now almost levelled with the turf, which are generally believed to have been used for driving the red deer into. There are yet survivors of the primitive red deer in the lonely wilds of Martindale; and up to the last century they still herded in Eskdale and Wastdale. One may regret the disappearance of these fine animals on sentimental grounds; but I have been told by old farmers of the destruction they worked in rick-yards and among the young corn, so that it was impossible to tolerate them any longer. An old lady has told me how, when she was a girl in Martindale, she was employed in keeping off the fierce red deer from robbing the sheep of their winter fodder.

Duddon springs up above there on Wrynose Gap in a swampy tableland, the watershed between the cheerful, happy-looking valley of Langdale and the vale of Duddon, not many yards intervening between the sources of the Brathay and of our Duddon. The famous Three Shire Stones preside at the birth of both, where without any great extension of the person one may lie at the same moment in the three counties of Lancashire, Westmoreland, and Cumberland. For if the Duddon exactly divides Cumberland from Lancashire, the sod next beyond the source must be in Westmoreland.

There amid cloud and storm, and desolation vast and drear, the infant Duddon begins his course with slow uncertain step. Many streams tumbling down the amphitheatre of dark hillsides join the main current which, when it reaches the bottom of the treeless waste of Wrynose Bottom, is already a rapid, clamorous stream commencing its endless war of stones and waters.

> "No check, no stay this streamlet fears,
> How merrily it goes!
> 'Twill murmur on a thousand years,
> And flow as now it flows."

The morning after breaks with a pure and pearly light, and I take a kindly farewell of my pleasant entertainers. How we glory while we gaze! Glory in all creation, bountiful, infinitely beautiful, teeming with objects sublime and majestic or minutely lovely, which create thoughts too deep for utterance.

Seeing is happiness without the labour of reflection; and we feel that we are commencing

> "One of those heavenly days that cannot die."

What marvellous and incredible effects are produced by the play and combination of the changeful atmospheric light upon running waters! Here runneth a brook, only a yard wide, flowing with great rapidity after last night's copious rain.* I am drawn aside to gaze at the liquid lapse of shining waters by the strange spectacle of an intense and brilliant opal light within of mingling prismatic and iridescent hues

* For the rain is very plentiful here, over 100 inches in a year.

of violet and purple, azure blue and malachite-greens, with amber yellow, harmoniously blended with shining russet browns. I stop to ascertain what can be the cause of this new phenomenon. What can compose the streamlet's bed that rolls with hues so strange and fairy-like? And I see with surprise merely the long and waving tresses of bedded water-grass and pond-weed, washed into graceful motion by the impetuous limpid stream, whose light is blended with reflections from the flower-spangled bank, from a low green mossy wall, and from a sky struggling between sunshine and cloud. These alone, with dioptric laws of which no account can be rendered, combine to produce an unusual metallic lustre such as I never saw before, except faintly imitated in imaginative pictures of fairy-land, nor ever expect to see again. It is "that light that never shone o'er land or sea."

Perhaps the most remarkable advantage, in an artistic point of view, which we possess in the Lake district, is the ever-shifting and change-ful character of the scenery. We have the same physical features continually before our eyes under perpetually varying effects of light and shadow, running through all imaginable shades that are possible in Nature, from bright celestial blue, and green like that of emeralds, to purple bathed in rose, and ending for a while in the darkest hues. I have seen Black Combe mantled in snow on a bright winter's morning at sunrise, royally clothed in alpine hues of rose and pink and violet and gold, shining with the brilliancy of the diamond. From Helvellyn I have seen, after a rainy morning, Ullswater lying mapped below of an ultramarine of incredible brilliancy, and all the rolling ocean of mountains, valleys, and plains beyond bathed in crystalline cerulean blue; but encompassed in a frame of vast black precipices which seemed to be steeped in night, while a heavenly light smiled upon all the rest of the scene.

Here each grey and slate-roofed humble tenement is half-hidden in its setting of sycamore-trees, and is encompassed by its little farm of twelve to twenty acres of green pasture; and you long to bid good morning to the quiet and honest folk that dwell in them; and they are glad if you do, and will talk with you as long as you like, for they see very few strangers passing up and down this dale. Then comes the

wild fell again; then another ancient cottage, but perhaps whitewashed this time, till you come to the "open prospect," where they lie scattered over a wider tract. About a mile from Seathwaite Church,

> "Hail to the Fields—with dwellings sprinkled o'er,
> And one small hamlet, under a green hill
> Clustering, with barn and byre, and spouting mill!
> A glance suffices."

Here the narrow dale opens out, and the rural valley spreads before us, green and charming. The farms, instead of being separated by wild bits of fell land, are only divided from each other by dimpling becks and moss-grown fences.* Behind Tongue House you see a mountain-path climbing to Seathwaite Tarn, a lonely sheet of water lying 1,210 feet high, yet bosomed deep beneath Grey Friar and the Old Man, with their outlying buttresses. It is a favourite spot for a picnic for the neighbouring gentry and their friends. Fifty will sometimes gather here for a merry day. The tarn is drawn, the trout and char come in by hundreds, and are cooked on the spot in some fissure of the rocks, and never any sauce is asked for but the keen appetite engendered by the ozone in the mountain air. This elevated glen is full of interest to the geologist, with its moraines, its *blocs perchés*, and its accumulations of boulders, where the ice last melted after the glacial period.

It is the weathering of innumerable ages which has produced these manifold fantastic forms of rock, and caused the downfall and the mysterious distribution of vast detached blocks, which have lain for centuries resting upon, or lying against, each other, the erratic boulders weathering with age to a creamy whiteness.

But here are, a short way apart, two venerable grey cottages, each nestling under its own steep rude crag. The first is Nettleslack, which is deserted, though not entirely ruined; the other is called Undercrag, and is in excellent repair, and inhabited by Joseph Walker—some

> * "Thy church and cottages of mountain stone,
> Clustered like stars some few, but singly some,
> And lurking dimly in their shy retreats,
> Or glancing at each other's cheerful looks,
> Like separated stars with clouds between."
> (See Knight's "Wordsworth," p. 42.)

descendant (though I was told the kindred is "worn out") of Walker "The Wonderful." In which of these cottages the venerable pastor of Seathwaite was born is uncertain among the dalespeople, though the guide-books and local histories pronounce without hesitation for Undercrag.

As I pass the new chapel of Seathwaite (sprung up fresh and beautiful from the very site of its revered predecessor), I bow my head in deep and heartfelt respect for the venerable pastor, whose name is still (1883) here held in honour and regard after the eighty years since he exchanged his rustic wreath of honest fame for an incorruptible crown of glory.

> "Sacred Religion! 'mother of form and fear,'
> Dread arbitress of mutable respect,
> New rites ordaining when the old are wrecked,
> Or cease to please the fickle worshipper.
> Mother of Love! (that name best suits thee here)
> Mother of Love! In this deep vale, protect
> Truth's holy lamp, pure source of bright effect,
> Gifted to purge the vapouring atmosphere
> That seeks to stifle it;—as in those days
> When this low Pile a Gospel Teacher knew,
> Whose good works formed an endless retinue:
> A Pastor such as Chaucer's verse portrays;
> Such as the heaven-taught skill of Herbert drew;
> And tender Goldsmith crowned with deathless praise."

I will not enter here into the almost legendary history of the Rev. Robert Walker, surnamed "The Wonderful." It has been told so often, in almost precisely the same words, that one is rather tired of hearing the same unvarying tale. So much is certain, that he died in 1802, at the age of ninety-three, having been sixty-seven years incumbent of Seathwaite; and that his wife died in 1800, at the same advanced age. That he was a man of great industry and thrift, and of unsullied honesty and integrity, is also certain, or his successor would not have made in the burial register the remarkable entry: "He was a man singular for his temperance, industry, and integrity."

Before I began personally to inquire into the history of the Rev. Robert Walker, I used to think that surely he must have owed much of

his honourable fame to the fortunate circumstance that he had been sung by the first and hitherto the greatest of the laureated poets of England. But it is not so. I am at this moment fresh from a conversation with two venerable ladies (sisters), parishioners of Broughton, who were both baptised by him, and who spent the best portion of a long life in Seathwaite, and they good-humouredly laugh to scorn the idea of Mr. Walker being indebted for his fame to a mere poet. "Oh, no, sir; he was good in every way. We never heard anybody say a word against him."

When he accepted the living of Seathwaite, £5 a year, a cottage, and an acre of glebe, with £40 by his excellent wife, were all he had to live upon.* The £40 went to furnish the house, and yet when he died he had to leave to his children the sum of £2,000, solely the fruits of honest industry and frugality. There, dwelling amongst his people, he lived and ministered both spiritually and temporally for the space of sixty-seven years to his scattered parishioners, numbering about a hundred and thirty souls, with invariable kindness and fidelity, with the grave dignity becoming his position, and bearing a stainless and perfectly irreproachable character. He brought up a family of eleven children, educated them wholly himself, with his child-parishioners, in the humble little chapel, sitting within the altar-rails, and using the communion-table as his desk. While he taught he was spinning at his wheel. All his scholars (with one of whom, eighty years of age, I conversed twelve years ago) well remember his unvarying kindness and good temper; and he produced such scholars in more than merely

* Those were days of distressing poverty for the country clergy in these northern parts, when "£5 a year, goose-grass, harden sark (a tough durable shirt), and whittlegate" were all that many of the best of the clergy might look to for a living. "Whittlegate is to have two or three weeks' victuals at each house, according to the ability of the inhabitants, which was settled amongst them so that the parson should go his course as regular as the sun, and complete it as annually. Few houses having more knives than one or two, the pastor was often obliged to buy his own (though sometimes it was bought for him by the chapel wardens), and march from house to house with his whittle seeking fresh pasturage; as master of the herd he demanded the elbow-chair at the table-head, which was often made of part of a hollow ash-tree, as may in these parts be seen at this day. A person was thought a proud fellow in those days that was not content without a fork to his knife; he was reproved for it, and told that fingers were made before forks."—"Survey of the Lakes," by James Clark, land surveyor, 1787. The same authority affirms that some pastors were fortunate enough to obtain a suit of clothes annually from their compassionate parishioners.

elementary subjects as have never been surpassed in Seathwaite since. He made no charge for teaching, and only received occasionally grateful and substantial acknowledgments from his parishioners. He did all their legal work, such as making wills, drawing up leases, agreements, and so forth. He performed all kinds of husbandry, including sheep-shearing, cutting and drying peat; and he excelled in all those employments, "for he was a wonderfully clever man," said my aged informants, kindling with enthusiasm, and was always ready to help his neighbours in their agricultural or their pastoral labours, receiving in recompense, perhaps, a quarter of a sheep or a fleece in a year—perhaps less; but whatever he did and whatever he took, all was done pleasantly and kindly. The "high-enders" from Troutal or Cockley Beck always came to church whenever it was possible. In his days no one dreamed of staying from church unless absolutely prevented; and for all those distant wayfarers he always had basins of broth prepared, and took no pay—so my good old parishioners positively assure me; although some, with less claim to know, venture to affirm that he charged twopence a head, which I am now sincerely glad to be able to deny. Those were pre-teetotal days, and he lost neither dignity nor character by brewing a pure light ale, which he gave in strict moderation for a small payment to wayfarers passing up or down that long and lonely valley, on a stone seat on the other side of the road before the Parsonage, adding bread and cheese free of charge.

He was a rather short, stout man, of ruddy complexion (so I have it from accurate information),* and he always wore a long blue gown made of wool spun by his own hand, and confined round the waist with a leathern strap. Wooden clogs he wore, as a matter of course. All the large and accumulating store of family linen was of their own spinning, the stray tufts of wool being constantly picked off the brambles and hedges, wherever they found them, to be carded and spun.

It is remembered with a yet unfaded gratitude how he declined the addition of the curacy of Ulpha to his own, on the ground that he could not properly be schoolmaster and clergyman to both parishes at once,

* A great-nephew of his, a labourer, in my parish corresponds exactly with that description. But most of his numerous descendants are of much higher station than labourers.

which would have created a feeling of dissatisfaction among the members of his beloved Seathwaite flock.

A little of romance enters into Canon Parkinson's account of him; but there is none in the grave and truthful description given with so much grace by Wordsworth. It is remarkable that he was never known as "the Wonderful" in his lifetime, nor for long after, until Canon Parkinson seems to have invented or discovered the epithet. There is no question whatever in my mind, after gleaning and gathering up with reverent care the fading memories of eighty years, that the love and the respect that cling to the venerated name of Robert Walker, like the sweet, long-clinging odour of sandal-wood, is wholly genuine, and is entirely independent of that which, to the people of the dale, is the mere adventitious aid either of poetry or of prose.

Just behind the Parsonage is an old and ruined carding-mill, which was turned, when it worked, by the Seathwaite Tarnbeck, and not by the Duddon; so that, after all, the poet is right when he sings—

> "Child of the clouds! remote from every taint
> Of sordid industry thy lot is cast."

But forgive the poet! He did not mean to denounce all industry as sordid; only if it polluted his "long-loved Duddon"!

Crossing a few meadows past the ruined carding-mill, we come at last to Wordsworth's own "Stepping-Stones," under Wallabarrow Crag, which many a visitor seeks in vain.

> "The struggling rill insensibly is grown
> Into a brook of loud and stately march,
> Crossed ever and anon by plank or arch;
> And, for like use, lo! what might seem a zone
> Chosen for ornament—stone matched with stone
> In studied symmetry, with interspace
> For the clear waters to pursue their race
> Without restraint. How swiftly have they flown,
> Succeeding—still succeeding! Here the Child
> Puts, when the high swoln Flood runs fierce and wild,
> His budding courage to the proof; and here
> Declining Manhood learns to note the sly
> And sure encroachments of infirmity—
> Thinking how fast Time runs, life's end how near!

Not so that Pair whose youthful spirits dance
With prompt emotion, urging them to pass;
A sweet confusion checks the shepherd lass;
Blushing she eyes the dizzy flood askance;
To stop ashamed—too timid to advance;
She ventures once again—another pause!
His outstretched hand he tauntingly withdraws—
She sues for help with piteous utterance!
Chidden, she chides again; the thrilling touch
Both feel, when he renews the wished-for aid:
Ah! if their fluttering hearts should stir too much,
Should beat too strongly, both may be betrayed.
The frolic Loves, who from yon high rock see
The struggle, clap their wings for victory!"

Thus the poet pictures childhood, youth, and age putting their budding or their declining powers to the proof in crossing the rapid river by that hazardous-looking path. Then a youth and a maiden are imagined, the one with provoking playfulness, the other with timid remonstrance, venturing over this most welcome and delightful way of not unpleasant peril. They certainly do require a sure foot and a steady eye who venture across, and I felt glad when I had got safely over. There are seventeen large and well-worn stepping-stones in the stream, which runs swiftly with an ordinary depth of about eighteen inches.

From Seathwaite to Ulpha let the active tourist by no means travel ignominiously in a carriage by the high-road down the valley, but continue his way past the stepping-stones under Wallabarrow, one of the noblest isolated crags in Europe. There he is again rejoined by his noisy, chattering companion, the Duddon, considerably broader, but not one whit steadier, since we saw him last. This is a charming rural walk amongst green pastures and wooded fells, with pleasant-looking farm-houses at intervals.

Here we encounter an interesting geological curiosity. Skirting the stream by a foot-path, we suddenly come upon a section of the river-bed where, for some 150 yards, the water seems to run of a bloody red. In spots up and down the valley, but all in one straight line, a hard rock of a rich red crops out. One in particular, in an elevated position among the woods, stands out conspicuously from a distance, ruddy amidst the

green trees. It is a red felsite dike—a fissure of unknown depth, of volcanic origin, running two miles from Wallabarrow to Troutal, and of only a few yards in width. The river breaking off small fragments, and rolling them down till they become smooth rounded pebbles, gives us those pretty bits of colour we see enlivening the bed of the river at Duddon Bridge, and which also supply the small red boulders that here and there stud the pebble pavements of Broughton.

There is an exceedingly fine reach of the Duddon not far from Ulpha Kirk, where the river runs swiftly between huge bare masses of grey rock, boldly and deeply cleft, arched overhead by trees, and a beautiful little waterfall plunging down from the bank into the river. Here the Osmunda is found superbly tall, and the starry Parnassia beautiful and abundant. The spot is a perfect gem of beauty, and well worth a deviation.

Ulpha Church, called by the older people Oopha Kirk, here dominates the vale—

> "The Kirk of Ulpha to the pilgrim's eye
> Is welcome as a star, that doth present
> Its shining forehead through the peaceful rent
> Of a black cloud diffused o'er half the sky."

Like too many other churches in the district, it was a mouldy, earthy-smelling, squalid, and poverty-stricken rustic place of worship; but has, under a new and active young vicar, been thoroughly emptied of all its grotesque and ungraceful contents, and refurnished with a simple and refined taste; and now it looks just as it should do—not debased and dirty, but light and clean and neat in every part. The exterior, with the exceptions of a new porch, belfry, and lych-gate, remains exactly as Wordsworth saw it, when he used to meditate in the vale, and stay at the Kirk-house, a name often given to the village inn in these parts. The memory of the poet, *as a poet*, still survives among the aged in the valley, which, as he was born in 1770 and died in 1850, may very well be. An old lady remembers well his kindness to children, and how fond he was of patting them on the head.

Very restful and very charming to the eye and mind is the prospect of this plain and homely little church looking down so peacefully upon

the rushing torrent far below, which, for want of anything better to do, has been busy for ages scooping out the great blue-grey rocks in the river-bed into a variety of the strangest forms.

On a stone of the bridge is rudely carved "Watch, 1749," cut, it is said, during a severe visitation of pestilence, when cattle were not allowed to pass out of one county into the next.

The Duddon Sonnets portray no woodland scenes below Ulpha Bridge. But as there is some surpassingly beautiful scenery below that point, we will yet continue our journey. From the bridge the main road leads along the foot of the Dunnerdale Fells to Broughton and to Millom. The scenery, though grand and noble, is bare and wild. In the boggy streams running off these fells is found the great sundew (*Drosera anglica*), a rare plant. The valley is shut in between imposing rocky crags of a pale grey colour on the Dunnerdale or Lancashire side; on the Cumberland side by the majestic woods of Duddon Hall and the mountain called the Pen, and all the Black Combe range of fells. It must have been with his customary bold defiance of the realistic school that Wordsworth chose to speak of the Plain of Dunnerdale, where of plane country there is none whatever; and being in my own parish, of course I know Dunnerdale and all its snug farms intimately. The name is probably from Duddon dale, as the island of Dunnerholme would be from Duddon holm.

We follow down the stream on the Cumberland side, as containing the most picturesque objects. All this side of the Duddon abounds in the loveliest woodland scenery, which here we survey in quieter mood, "soothed by the unseen river's gentle roar." Vast moss-grown fragments of rock or boulders are everywhere overshadowed by beech and fir, by oak and ash; the shady banks are graced with plumy beech-fern, and the darker recesses carpeted with the oak-fern. Every bridge down the river is darkly clad in rue-fern and in maidenhair spleenwort. I know the *Cystopteris fragilis* growing just where it should do, on a long narrow band of limestone; but not wanting it to be all carried away, I refrain from particularising the spot; and I must be equally reticent about the *Hymenophyllum*, which covers the boulders in some moist places. The *Impatiens* is found in abundance in the moist and

shady woods. The lily of the valley abounds in a wood not to be entered without leave. The globe-flowers make the banks gay. In fact, there are few richer botanical fields than the lower Duddon. In Sonnet VI. occurs the line—

"The trembling eyebright showed her sapphire blue."

Would it have spoiled good poetry to have read instead more truly, "the bright germander," as Tennyson says, "her blue germander eye"? For the eyebright is *Euphrasia officinalis*, a pretty little white flower with streaks of purple and yellow, and the germander speedwell is certainly the blue flower here meant.

Arriving near to Duddon Hall, we cross the Loggan beck, a tributary of the Duddon, a stream which, taking its rise in black swamps and spongy moors far up the fells, comes thundering down through cloven rocks and sylvan ferny shades, till it reaches the woods, where, down a bed filled with huge blue-grey boulders, it tears along round one obstacle, and overleaps another with a scornful bound, here curling itself snugly up in calm and silent pools, there rushing off again with a loud roar to dash itself down a miniature precipice; here lovingly encircled by fondly drooping boughs, there throwing itself headlong down a clear and skylit space, and finding at last a brief rest at Beckfoot among cottages and homesteads such as an artist loves to paint. Then again gathering fresh strength below the broken bridge, the Loggan leaps at a bound into a deep and narrow chasm darkened with overhanging trees, forming pictures of exquisite beauty. Then on again with a rush and a vigorous roar, it adds its turmoil and its din to that of the now mighty Duddon, growing fiercer and stronger by the union to force its way through the deep and awful chasm at Hawes Bridge.

Immediately below the bridge is a deep glassy pool, Rawfold dub,

—— "whose depths surpass
In crystal clearness Dian's looking-glass;"

where the silvery salmon loves to sleep, poised on equal fin.

Descending the lower reaches of the Duddon valley on the Cumberland side, while the silver flashing river rolls on its course to liquid

music, the eye is conducted upward through the thick woods, rising stage above stage, and the naked fells peering above them, and thence to the sky-line, where the generally undulating or slightly irregular contour of the rocks of volcanic ash is abruptly broken by a rude vast mass of angular black crags, called Buckbarrow,* of which, at this distance, you can hardly conjecture the composition. This rocky pile of split and fissured crags, on a near examination, is found to be well worth the long rough walk by which it is to be reached. Let me, then (just fresh from an actual inspection), endeavour to describe the nature and appearance of these singular crags. The way upon wheels or on horseback from Broughton would be over Duddon Bridge, past Duddon Hall, rising on the wild fell road to Bootle, until, at about six miles from Broughton, it brings you within a mile and a half of the crags. Here the carriage must be left (and there is no shelter for it for a long way), and the horseman or pedestrian must make the best of his way over rising rough and boggy ground to the height of about 900 feet above the sea-level, where he reaches the strange gloomy pile of jagged and broken, shattered and riven volcanic rocks, of which it seems natural to believe that we are actually standing over the crater of a small extinct volcano. It stands isolated on the ridge of the fell, a conspicuous object from Broughton, covering a space of about three or four acres. The huge rampart of black rock, blasted and tormented by the storms of a thousand ages, bristles with vast blocks or pinnacles of a hard volcanic ash. Awful for their dark immovable grandeur, they sternly rise bold and bluff, here into pinnacled crags, there worn down by the innumerable tempests which have beaten fiercely upon them from some period long anterior to the Glacial Age down to the soft, though still transitional, beauty of the age in which we now live. Grand is the belt of the everlasting hills which encircle us in the far-distant horizon on the land side, and the blue sea and the spreading yellow sands of Duddon to the west and south. And yet this wondrous scene is one of the almost unknown spots of the borderland of the Lake District. No guide-book but Baddeley's refers to it. I dare say none have ever visited it but the

* This crag is also called Worm (*i.e.*, Dragon) Crag.

neighbouring shepherds, the sportsmen, and the officers of the Geological and other Ordnance Surveys. I believe it to be a once submarine, and then upheaved, volcano. A hard volcanic ash, light grey and spotted with white, composes it, and a lava harder still crops out in a south-easterly direction. Some little conception of the geological history of these fells is a sensible addition to the interest felt in their exploration. Here, within the short space of a mile, are visible evidences both of the existence of the volcanic fires of past ages and of glacial action. After the age of fire, succeeded, at a long interval, the ice age, when the vale of Duddon was just as full of ice, in all the sublime glory and majesty of glacier forms, as is the Rhone Glacier now for twenty-five miles above the living source of the infant Rhone. But how do we know this? We know it certainly by the evidence of the action of the grinding and polishing of the ice-torrent, in its slow and ponderous passage down to the icy sea below, upon the hardened volcanic ash through which the Duddon at length has worn its way. Just above the Duddon woods stretch out long spaces of hardened rock, polished to the smoothness of glass by the passage of the ice-torrent, bearing down with it the boulders and the gravels, which have planed the rugged surfaces of rock to that polish which they retain down to this day. Just such smooth surfaces of rock, but vastly greater, are well known on most of the Swiss Alpine passes, especially, as I well remember, on the St. Gothard, and the wonderful Höhle Platte on the Grimsel, over which neither horse nor man could pass without the help of a roughened track.

Here we stand over that which might become the ruin of our empire. Beneath our feet is a crust of solid matter, but how perilously thin contrasted with the immeasurable depth and mass of fluid fire on which it rests with a precarious endurance of which the unreflective mind has no conception! The ground on which we think we stand so securely to-day, once undoubtedly vomited torrents of liquid fire and rivers of molten lava, now hardened into the volcanic ash we see all around us. Suppose these subterranean dormant fires were to burst out afresh, the land to become volcanic again, like that which borders the Cordilleras, and earthquakes and the great eruptive forces again

to resume their awful sway—could England survive it? Her magnificent public and private edifices overthrown; her great stone bridges levelled with the ground; the Forth cantilever Bridge, and the Britannia tubular Bridge, not perhaps thrown down, but twisted out of the beautiful straightness without which they would become worthless; her closely packed cities heaped in piles of ruin—all this might be the result of two or three minutes' heaving and trembling of an earthquake in a single night. The public records would be lost, Government would be too seriously embarrassed to be able to hold together. England would be bankrupt, and sink down to the rank of the weak and thinly populated states of the lands of the volcano and the earthquake.

Though some eight miles distant, I cannot resist the temptation here to refer to a spot always associated in my mind with the honoured name of John Ruskin, my kind and dear friend during the time that he enjoyed good health. There is a very wonderful example of rock-weathering, situated by the dark and melancholy tarn called Goat's Water, which lies in the deep and rock-encompassed hollow between the Dow Crags and the Old Man, by whose side rise, gaunt and weird, some strange rocks, furrowed and scored and corrugated all over, exactly as the sea-sands are ripple-marked after the tide has left them. I first drew to it the attention of some officers of the Geological Ordnance Survey who happened, fortunately, to be then working on the spot, and they have duly recorded the phenomenon in their observations. Soon after, Mr. Ruskin and I made this the object of a summer day's excursion from Brantwood—a day not to be forgotten—and a mountain walk, in which I satisfied at least myself that my friend, in an unconventional fashion of his own, not readily intelligible to everybody, differing from some who "hold the truth in unrighteousness," and notwithstanding certain protestations made on former occasions, is indeed a Christian man, a servant of God, who holds the truth *in righteousness*. Of course there are not a few who, working by line and rule, would fit everybody in the matrix from which they issued themselves, and will be surprised at this declaration, which, however, without presuming to judge any who differ from me, I make in all sincerity.

On these remarkable rocks my friend makes the following remark in "Deucalion," page 222:—"The most wonderful piece of weathering in all my own district is on a projecting mass of intensely hard rock on the eastern side of Goat's Water. It was discovered and shown to me by my friend the Rev. F. A. Malleson; and exactly resembles deep ripple-marking, though nothing in the grain of the rock indicates its undulating structure."

[Since writing the above reminiscence of my few years' friendship with Mr. Ruskin (the intercourse, but not the friendship, being broken by his illness), a new and happy revelation has been made to me—a complete corroboration of hopes which before had but a struggling existence.

On February 5, this year 1890 (the first really brilliant day after two months of storms and heavy rains), the Rector of Grasmere and myself had taken out the Rev. Canon G. E. Mason, the admirable conductor of a Retreat of Clergy at Rydal (then in its midst), along the lovely banks of Rydal Water, when the conversation chanced to fall upon the circumstances just narrated, and Mr. Fletcher mentioned that in "Præterita" Mr. Ruskin had made a clear and unhesitating statement of his faith in the Christian religion. At my request, he very kindly sent me a copy of the passage to which he referred, which I shall here give in full:—

"In these days of the religion of this and that—briefly, let us say, the religion of Stocks and Posts—in order to say a clear word of the Campo Santo, one must first say a firm word concerning Christianity itself. I find numbers, even of the most intelligent and amiable people, not knowing what the word means; because they are always asking how much is true, and how much they like, and never ask, first, what *was* the total meaning of it, whether they like it or not.

"The total meaning was, and is, that the God who made earth and its creatures took at a certain time upon the earth the flesh and form of man; in that flesh sustained the pain and died the death of the creature He had made; rose again after death into glorious human life; and when the date of the human race is ended, will return in visible human form, and render to every man according to his work. Christianity is the belief in and love of God thus manifested. Anything less than this, the mere acceptance of the sayings of Christ, or assertion of any less than Divine power in His Being, may be, for aught I know, enough for virtue, peace, and safety; but they do not make people Christians, or enable them to understand the heart of the simplest believer in the old doctrine."—"Præterita," Vol. II. (ed. 1887), pp. 208, 209.

To have known and loved and admired John Ruskin in his days of

health and strength, to have grieved over his doubts and struggles, and to see at length the clouds rolled away, and the Sun of Righteousness risen with healing in His wings, as the sun in the heavens was on that day by Rydal Water shining in unclouded glory out of a serene sky, and glittering in the placid surface of the sweet blue lake at our feet, after so long a season of storm and darkness, was an experience calling for the deepest thankfulness.]

Shall I be forgiven if I quote the following short passage from a published letter addressed to the writer?—

"I have this morning been reading your own [comments], on which I very earnestly congratulate you. God knows it is not because they are friendly or complimentary, but because you *do* see what I mean; and people hardly ever do; and I think it needs very considerable power and feeling to forgive and understand as you do."—"Letters to the Clergy on the Lord's Prayer and the Church," page 371.

I may, I trust, without any violation of confidence, relate the apparently slight event that preceded our mountain walk to see the curious rocks at Goat's Water. I had visited Mr. Ruskin at Brantwood, and in a conversation in the drawing-room he had come to the point that he said, "I have already given up the Resurrection," when the door-bell rang, and he added, "It is well that we are interrupted, or I might have said things that would have pained you more still." Shortly after came the invitation (1879) to explore the flanks of the Old Man of Coniston, the quiet lunch, the pleasant row across the lake, and the slow toilsome ascent of the mountain by two men in close conference, both beginning to feel the inroads of age.

The last scene of all is up the stream above Duddon Bridge, just one mile from the quaint and ancient little village-town of Broughton-in-Furness. The whole neighbourhood is graced and beautified with woods, with flowers, ferns, and pretty cottages at Bank End embowered in shade; while looking up the placid sheet of Duddon, and just above the bridge, is a finished landscape of wood and water, mountain and fell, seen by the writer a thousand times with undiminished love and interest.

"So may thy poet, cloud-born stream! be free—
The sweets of earth contentedly resigned,

And each tumultuous working left behind
At seemly distance—to advance like thee;
Prepared in peace of heart, in calm of mind
And soul, to mingle with Eternity."

Soon after this, Duddon enters the staid and sober stage of his later existence. His gambols and his merry pranks are ended, and, now that the last bridge is passed, he soon spreads widely over the sandy estuary.

"Not hurled precipitous from steep to steep;
Lingering no more 'mid flower-enamelled lands
And blooming thickets; nor by rocky bands
Held; but in radiant progress towards the Deep
Where mightiest rivers into powerless sleep
Sink, and forget their nature—*now* expands
Majestic Duddon, over smooth flat sands,
Gliding in silence with unfettered sweep!
Beneath an ampler sky a region wide
Is opened round him: hamlets, towers, and towns,
And blue-topped hills, behold him from afar."

What a contrast to the origin of the stream, only sixteen miles above! This child of the cloudy heavens enjoys a bright and happy youth, and dies young, entering the sea still clear and bright, and not yet sullied or impure. So might our childhood, so might our manhood, and even our old age, run sparkling and unsullied, till it enters into its rest in the all-embracing arms of the Everlasting Father.

"We, the brave, the mighty, and the wise,
We Men, who in our morn of youth defied
The elements, must vanish;—be it so!
Enough, if something from our hands have power
To live, and act, and serve the future hour;
And if, as toward the silent tomb we go,
Through love, through hope, and faith's transcendent dower,
We feel that we are greater than we know."

1883.

Some Swiss Notes.

SOME SWISS NOTES.

The Castle and the Battle of Grandson—Yverdon—Education in Switzerland—Temperance—Great Storm of 1877—Bormio—The Iron Gates of Cepina—Lago di Scale—Abundance of Churches and Wayside Shrines—Santa Caterina—Study of Alpine Scenery—Decay and Beggary at Bormio—Cretinism.

THE single line of rails from Neuchâtel to Yverdon runs close by the water-side, in which lie mirrored the low green hills of Fribourg, unfurnished with the vines which clothe its Vaudois banks, and the white villages and small towns repeating themselves in its limpid waters; but the brightest reflection of all is that of the jagged line of the gleaming Alps of Fribourg and Berne, which are not of the race of giants that tower into the sky further south, but yet are clothed with snow as far down as we can see. We pass Vaumarcus, the true battlefield of Grandson, which Sir Walter Scott, in "Anne of Geierstein" (with his usual inaccuracy in matters of detail) miscalled Vaumoreux; while he also, in the same narrative, transposed the head and the foot of the lake, Neuchâtel lying really at the foot and Yverdon at the head. The easy-going train stops at Grandson, which we visited at a later day, but will take the opportunity of mentioning in detail now. The Swiss châteaux, unlike the Schlösser of Tyrol, are castles indeed, towered and battlemented, solidly built for defence in those troublous days before the Swiss had learnt, as they have only so lately learnt, to appreciate the blessings of national unity.

The castle of Grandson is built on a high rock near the water-side, which used to bathe its feet, before the lake, by drainage, sank several feet, leaving a wide and desolate pebbly shore. Round a spacious courtyard, once the scene of jousts and tournaments, as well as of more serious conflicts, runs a lofty wooden gallery, standing exactly as it was constructed many centuries ago for attack and defence, and for holiday spectators of the rough sports below. We were shown a horrible

dungeon, to which, no doubt, Sir Walter was indebted for his description of the dark and dismal cell at La Jarette, in which Arthur Philipson was ruthlessly cast, with the momentary prospect of sinking through the caverned floor, which gaped beneath him, and in the ghastly depths of which he could hear the sullen plashing of the hungry waters which were to receive his corpse, crushed and torn in its fall on the opposing blades and spikes which bristled round its sides. Such was the horrible abyss shown to us, only half shorn of its terrors. Outside the castle walls stood the gloomy and forbidding keep, still darkened with rankly growing vegetation, where the butcher Charles of Burgundy hung the brave defenders of their beautiful country by hundreds from the branches of the trees. A stone bullet shot from the artillery of Charles, which thundered from the heights above, is still seen half embedded high up in the wall of the castle. Well was it for the brave sons of Helvetia that, fearless of the terrible odds of four to one, they rushed upon the too-confident foe, fought for half an hour, and drove them back in irretrievable rout. Within is a small collection of arms found in the neighbourhood—some on land, some in the lake itself—among them the two-handed swords (to which, with the stout arms and stouter hearts that swung them, the Swiss owed their complete victory), battle-axes, and frightful-looking spherical-headed clubs armed with long sharp steel spikes, which must have done terrible execution. The views from the castle across the lake are of great beauty. The castle itself is in good repair, and is the residence and property of an Italian gentleman. The beautiful and quiet western borders of the lake of Neuchâtel are not sufficiently known to English tourists, or rather to the wearied spirits of those whose activity has been brought to a standstill, and who must have rest and recreation before they can plunge again into the battle-field of life, with courage refreshed and spirits revived. The wonderful and magnificent limestone gorges, de l'Areuse and du Covetannaz, and the splendid Creux du Vent, are well worth a long journey.

Yverdon is a small town by no means devoid of attractions, and which would well reward a visit of a few days. But I intend here to speak less of scenery than of objects of living interest. Here is the fine towered castle where Pestalozzi gathered together the youthful sufferers

from the devastation of the great French irruption, and gave practical demonstration of the superiority of an intelligent, lively, and animated education of the faculties over the system of rote then most in vogue. They are about to raise a statue to him at Yverdon—to him whom they compelled, in 1825, to leave their town. The world persecutes many of its best benefactors, and after their death raises monuments to their memory. Under his successors the school degenerated considerably; but it has now for many years been the centre of education for the youth of Yverdon, thousands of whom are under instruction in a very large number of rooms, courts, and halls—better employed in the mental cultivation of the young than in the warfare and bloodshed for which these massive walls and high round towers were first erected. The writer, conducted by M. Naeff, his former schoolfellow of half a century ago (now the courteous and able president of the Yverdon School Board), could not but be greatly impressed with the brightness, activity, and intelligence of the teachers, and the ready apprehension, willing obedience, and cheerful compliance with discipline shown by the children. The manuals employed (which, of course, were only subsidiary to the *viva voce* instruction, which always holds the highest place in real education) seemed to me to be of the best kind, examined and approved before adoption by superior authority. Everywhere in the *Suisse Romande* (that is, Neuchâtel, Vaud, and Geneva) the school buildings are very spacious, each class being always taught in a separate room even in the small villages, and not, as is still too often the case in England in village schools, several classes going on noisily clashing together between the same four walls.

In many Swiss towns the ancient fortified châteaux, once the scenes of endless strife and division, are now patriotically employed in the education of the rising generation. It has been often truly observed that Switzerland is the most highly educated country in Europe. But an unhappy qualification of this high, but justly deserved, praise must be pronounced—that Switzerland is also one of the most notorious for its intemperance. In the beautiful National Exhibition at Zürich in 1883, it was surprising and painful to observe the large space devoted to the display not of wine only (at which we cannot be surprised),

but of ardent spirits, which are extracted from several indigenous plants.

Again, if education is to be really useful and a firm foundation of manly dignity, there must be books, magazines, periodicals, both cheap and popular, in sufficient abundance. This is just what Switzerland has not, and as long as she has nothing better to offer to her admirably educated youths than a very meagre proportion of wholesome literature and a pretty liberal supply of unwholesome trash, and worse than trash, pouring in from France, it is not much to be wondered at that the long winter evenings will be spent in rioting and drunkenness. At Lausanne and Geneva we had great difficulty in finding any kind of nice cheap periodicals for presents to servants, or to friends of the humbler class. At Geneva we sought for some time before we could discover the only shop in a by-street up a steep climb. Good literature seems as little prized in Switzerland as pure religion; and if the more enlightened and patriotic desire the material and moral, but above all the religious, advancement of their country, they must labour strenuously to add a pure and manly religious, or at any rate not irreligious, literature to a rightly regulated education. In Switzerland education is called free; and it is so in the sense that no poor persons are ever burdened with the expense of the education of their children. But as every household is equitably rated, it so happens that those who have no children help to pay for those who have, while poor persons with large families find their burdens considerably lightened by this participation of responsibility. The result, with the sad drawback which I have mentioned, is singularly effective. In our walks over the Jura pastures and among the mountain forest paths, we generally took with us some of Mrs. Grimké's* beautiful and useful little illuminated cards in French and in German, and showing these to the children we met, promised that they should have them if they could read them. All read with fluency and intelligence, consequently the distribution was pretty large. Even a bare-footed little cowboy of ten, near Ste. Croix, some 5,000 feet high, read them with perfect ease and a very good intonation.

* Of Higher Broughton, Manchester.

The great temperance movement is far from being unfelt in Switzerland; but its progress is slow, and accompanied with difficulty. At present it is so exclusively in the hands of "*les plus avancés*" in spiritual religion, that it is looked upon as a characteristic feature of the religious life; and is almost altogether discountenanced in the Église Nationale, in which to be too religious, that is to say openly religious at all, is generally and popularly accounted to be a mark of great weakness. It is much to be hoped that, by the blessing of God, a more decided feeling will sooner or later prevail in this fair land in favour of a practical Christianity according to the Word of God and not of man. Then it will be seen that a voluntary total abstinence adopted for example's sake is quite consistent with the exercise of a noble and reasonable religion. At any rate they might begin at infancy, and not give wine or beer, as is done almost universally, to infants of a year old. At present our bits of blue ribbon and the badge of the Church of England Temperance Society, often seen at table d'hôte, are looked upon with more wonder than admiration as new developments of British eccentricity. True it is that in a land of vines the question naturally arises: what about the grapes and the wine-making? But that is not so much the real question as how to get rid of the pernicious burning spirits they distil from the beautiful plants that clothe the land with splendour. No one would lose by letting the yellow gentian alone, which a girl (a *tempérante* of Ste. Croix) who was guiding us to the Chasseron described to us as *très nuisible*. It is one of the greatest mistakes possible to say, as is so often said, that the water in Switzerland is so bad that one is obliged to drink wine. We never found the water otherwise than pure, sparkling, and perfectly delicious. An abundance of springs and streams bursts forth from the mountain-sides in all directions, and is poured forth almost in torrents from those excellent fountains for all domestic uses which are seen in every *place*, and two or three in every street. The Vaudois seldom drink their own pure and limpid spring-water. The more the pity. But this is no reason why English people should join in the false charge and deprecate the best of water as a common beverage. Still, go where we will, we do find English ladies and gentlemen at table d'hôte with their bits of blue trying to set a quiet and unostentatious

example, and the movement which is of such recent growth in our own island will not tarry long before it enlists followers in the first health resort in Europe.

In the museum kept in the Castle of Yverdon is a small object associated with terrible recollections. It is simply a card carrying on it three or four slips cut from the branches of a tree, with the bark and the wood ripped and scored, torn and blistered all over; a sample of what all the trees were after the dreadful storm of 1877, as it was described to me by eye-witnesses. The north wind surged in terrible blasts, hovering with black wings over the ill-fated land. The dense sky descended like a low dark ceiling. The roaring and the bellowing of the wind drowned the incessant crash of thunder. Dense hail swooped down in masses of ice; and in eight minutes every tree and every vine was stripped of all its foliage and fruit, which lay chopped and torn into smallest fragments on the ground a foot thick. In a quarter of an hour not only was all hope of a harvest destroyed for that year, but it took several years for the trees and the vines to recover. Such are the storms to which sub-Alpine regions are liable.

It appears to me almost as if it were in England only that the Bible is really acknowledged as being both at the foundation of worship and in its superstructure; though unquestionably its indirect and insensible influence is everywhere manifest among "all people who profess and call themselves Christians." At Lugano I wanted to purchase an Italian Testament. But not a single Bible or New Testament could I find in any bookseller's shop in the capital of the Tessin, though at last I met with a single copy at an obscure stationer's. At Meran, in the Tyrol, the servants, young women of fair education, did not even know the outside of a Bible, never having seen one. Yet they loved their little devotional books and hymns which they showed me. In Protestant Switzerland, in the National Church, the Bible is very little used in the churches; though in the Église libre, where there is far more spiritual life, a better state of things exists. Usually the service commences with the solemn reading of the Ten Commandments by the schoolmaster, followed by our Lord's summary of them, after which the sacred Book

being no longer wanted, except to read the text from, is solemnly laid aside. I need hardly add that the matter of the sermon gains very little support or illustration from the words of Scripture. I report these personal observations not in a boastful spirit of vain censoriousness, but with a very deep regret that Swiss Protestantism owns so little in common with primitive and apostolic Christianity.

BAGNI DI BORMIO.

During our three weeks' stay at Bagni di Bormio in the Valtelline, the vast mountain masses of the Stelvio were seen rising so steeply from the very grounds of the hotel, only a small portion being visible at a time, that our curiosity and interest were awakened in a very lively manner, not unmixed with anxiety and apprehension. For it was already September; and we were due at Meran for my chaplaincy on the 21st, and we were almost daily hearing unpleasant rumours of heavy falls of snow on the Stelvio, which at this season stops all communication by the Eastern Alps. If, unfortunately for us, the snow should have come down just at this juncture, we should have been compelled to undertake a long and expensive journey round by the Lake of Como and Verona.

In June, 1882, a hundred labourers were kept at work for a month in clearing away snow from the road to keep the communication open. We therefore continually surveyed our colossal neighbour with an admiration not unmingled with awe and apprehension. By the end of September the Stelvio is always expected to be closed, and generally is so. We therefore had to keep a sharp look-out on the weather indications, and to be ready to depart on the first notice of serious danger.

Bagni di Bormio is a charming spot for a stay, either before or after crossing the Stelvio, and deserves a much higher appreciation than it has generally met with from tourists, bound either from Tyrol or for North Italy, who generally stay merely a night or two and pass on. Placed on an elevation of 4,396 feet above the sea-level, at the very head of the Valtelline, dominated by snowy and by rocky peaks, it enjoys the purest of air and some of the most magnificent of Alpine scenery, while

the hotel accommodation is everything that the most fastidious Briton can reasonably desire.

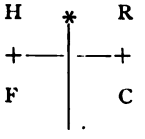
As it is an aim of mine to point out a few objects of interest which seem to have escaped others, I will here mention the wondrous and admirable iron gates of Cepina, which have been overlooked both by Murray and Baedeker. Cepina is a small out-of-the-way village about four miles from Bagni di Bormio down the valley. It stands rather high above the right bank of the Adda, opposite to that along which runs the high road to Tirano, and must be reached, after passing it half a mile, by crossing the river over the stone bridge. In this poor village stands an *ossuario* or mortuary house, a small square building containing unusually good frescoes within and without, and closed in by a triad of the most lovely and precious gates in wrought iron. Their remoteness from the beaten track will account for the neglect with which these remarkable gates have been treated. This splendid specimen of sixteenth-century ironwork consists of three circular-headed gates, the middle one about twelve feet high, the side ones about two feet lower and divided by granite pillars. The workmanship of these gates is of the most exquisite, and what I may call without a strained æstheticism, the most tender, delicacy, and we stood long gazing at them, lost in delight and admiration. A gentle and loving hand would seem to have wrought out every detail with an elaborate lightness and elegance rarely paralleled. They are made chiefly of ribbon iron about two inches wide, and a quarter of an inch thick, the edges facing outward, blossoming out with an energy resembling that of organised life, into foliated forms, into flowers, bosses, knots and delicate pillars twisted into the very lines of perfect grace. The whole graceful design is of such exquisite lightness, artfully combined with boldness and vigour, that one has a difficulty in believing that every single portion was wrought with the hammer, of which the strokes are plainly visible, and never even touched with the file. To me, at any rate, it appeared strange that those gates, now 300 years old, should never have had one touch of paint or varnish, and yet exhibited not the slightest appearance of rust. The designer and the workmen, I was told, were all of the Valtelline. The contadini or villagers are justly proud of this unique possession, and had just refused the offer of 20,000

francs made by Mr. Astor, the United States Minister at Rome, who was staying at Bormio Baths at the same time with us. The frescoes painted outside are very fine and of marvellous freshness, a singular part of them being, however, a couple of skeletons, represented as mourning in company together, with a strong expression of inconsolable grief depicted on their fleshless faces. I do not know that I ever before saw eyeless orbits weeping. Certainly one would hardly look for work so lovely, in a wild and rather poverty-stricken land, where not a single other object of artistic worth is to be seen for many miles. I know of nothing whatever noteworthy nearer than Madonna di Tirano, where is a very beautiful pilgrimage church, with much rich carving in wood and marble *

We cannot but lament the injury done to all decorative art by the too plentiful application of machinery. It is, I think, Lenormant who says, "L'art y a perdu, comme il perd presque partout, à l'emploi des machines."

Another interesting and little-known spot in this neighbourhood is the beautiful little mountain lake, Lago di Scale, about four miles from Bormio, and not noticed in Baedeker. You advance, continually ascending, until you see loftily rising before you a vast perpendicular wall of red rock, some 500 or 600 feet high, through which you understand that you are to penetrate, by some way not as yet apparent, until the increasingly steep and rugged stony path brings you face to face with a long and deep natural fissure or gorge, riven through the highest ridge, and scarcely three yards in width, to which you ascend by means of a wooden bridge of the very rudest construction. Covering and guarding each vast buttress of this gorge, which is in reality a pass between Swiss

* Writing of half-known or unknown places of antiquarian interest, let me here mention another valuable Alpine work of ancient religious art. Near Andermatt, close by the Unserenloch or Trou d'Uri, is the very ancient church of St. Columba, the priest of this wintry valley A.D. 632. The chancel is an irregular pentagon, not built straight with the nave. An old and rude oil painting in the sacristy of a Capuchin friar bears the inscription IODOCUS FILIUS REGIS ANGLIÆ. ORD EREMIT. AUG. A heavy pulpit of granite bears a date resembling 1339 (1339), which may probably be 1559. The font or holy-water basin, for it may be both, bears the monogram—which I do not profess to understand—



and Italian territory, stands an old square ruined tower. Threading the narrow defile, you debouch first into one narrow valley, then into another, wider and of great loveliness. The smooth hollow of the valley is filled with the stillest and most transparent of blue crystalline mountain lakes, a jewel in a picturesque setting of banks clothed with *Pinus montana*, and richly coloured, no doubt, earlier in the year with the dark pink blossoms of the so-called Alpine rose, which is in reality a rhododendron. This must be a rich hunting-ground for the botanist at the right season, as the dead and dying remains in the middle of September sufficiently attested. There were remains of *Saxifraga Cæsia*, the rich orange of *Senecio abrotonifolius* was still conspicuous, and on all the mountain-slopes around, the coveted *Edelweiss*. The richest pastures surround the head of the lake, which is between 6,000 and 7,000 feet high, where snugly nestles the farm, lately purchased with the lake and mountains by M. de Planta, whose name is great in the Engadine, the proprietor of the hotels of the old and new baths at Bormio, and of many broad acres and pastoral mountains in the Grisons country. Strange to say, there lay in hopeless idleness, extended on the grassy bank, two Italian Custom-house officers, whose too easy duty is to accost the extremely few travellers who use this unfrequented pass to cross from the Swiss Grisons into the Italian Valtelline, and inquire whether they happen to have any "cigarri o tabacchi" about them: a form through which they of course went in our case also, to whom smoking is an accomplishment unknown! I tried to have a chat with the poor lonely fellows, which my very limited knowledge of Italian brought to too early a close.

Standing by the side of this lake the surrounding prospect is magnificent with Alpine domes, cones, and peaks in every direction, the grand Bernina masses in Switzerland, and the Adamello range in Italy standing out sharply and brilliantly conspicuous against the dark blue.

Even in this remote and desolate spot is a little chapel, how and when used I am unable to say. It was not open as churches generally are in Italy, but as is usual in lonely spots, a grated window opening is left on each side of the door, with a stone kneeling-place under it, for such worshippers as desired to behold the altar within. Churches abound in

all the Valtelline and the adjacent Tyrol. You find them everywhere, on mountain summits, in silent forests, by rushing torrents, in lonely gorges and passes; wherever there are two or three houses within the distance of a couple or so of miles, there we shall be certain to find a church, besides the numberless painted shrines, pictures, crosses, and crucifixes which you meet at every half-mile. Never have I seen one of these religious memorials defaced or irreverently used. They stand in perfect security against injury for centuries. We of the reformed faith might, if we would, learn lessons from the reverence of these people, who generally look upon us as the Chinese do upon European barbarians. But in our desire to clear ourselves from every taint of superstition, we have perhaps thrown away with too little discrimination the good with the bad. We seldom went into a church without finding someone in devout or at any rate silent prayer, and what the French so well call *recueillement.*

The simple piety and artless affection for their pastors felt by these Alpine folk seemed pleasantly illustrated to us by the following inscriptions, which I copied from the front of a church and on the priest's house at Hospenthal, at the foot of the road over the St. Gothard. A new priest had just been appointed.

Before the church:—

"Wie sich zum Kranz umschlingen,
Die frischen Zweige hier
Wird Eintracht dich umringen
Im Volk ergeben dir.

Vom lieben Gott beschieden,
Zu spenden Gottes Frieden
Und Himmelstrost im Leben.
Bist du hier uns gegeben."

Before the presbytery:—

"Komm und bewahre gut deine Heerde,
Sei herzlich willkommen du Seelenhirte."

A favourite and exceedingly fine excursion from Bormio is to St. Caterina, at the long and narrow head of the Furva valley. Half-way, at St. Nicolo, is an exhibition which is no help to devotion; a mortuary

chapel, rather let us call it a bone and charnel house, in which the example of pure taste set at Cepina has not been followed. The valley ends at the Baths of St. Caterina, and from this terminus none go further, except with guides, over the lofty and somewhat dangerous passes among snow-fields and glaciers.

The fairest, noblest peak in sight is Monte Tresero, shining lustrously, like frosted silver, in the brilliant Italian sunshine, with a dazzling whiteness with which no other white can vie, certainly not the fairest, purest swansdown, for owing to the abundance of white light reflected from the glittering surface, no shadows are thrown. It rises before me still as a vividly remembered picture, set in the dainty sapphire blue of a cloudless southern sky, and shaded at every softly swelling fold, and at every sharp-cut ridge, by the blended shadows of pale blue and silver greys of varying depth and hue, thrown by a brilliant sun, dappled and flecked with darker ledges and blocks of isolated outcropping rocks. Then lower down between the lines of 7,000 and 8,000 feet, above the line of glacial action, lie spread the gently undulating Alpine pastures, with the little brown pine-built châlets or *sennhütte* dropped here and there with a charming variety. Then the eye ranges down to the region of the dark and solemn forests of pine, intersected here by the long silver streaks of roaring torrents, there by the shepherd's and the woodman's forest-path—forests whose serried crowds of deep-green-pointed spires are relieved from a too great and wearisome monotony by the gentle dips and depressions of the mountain-sides and the vacant grassy interspaces, green and smooth at this distance, apparently, as an English lawn. Lastly, the bright green valley, with its rude imperfect cultivation, its brawling torrent of grey glacier water, its poor and half-ruined villages, not one, however small, without its old Italian towered church, enriched with frescoed walls, and its little wayside shrines and crucifixes.

Bormio is an antiquated, decaying, and squalid town of scarcely 1,000 inhabitants. The main street is just fifteen feet wide, with a gutter running down its centre, with no pavement, and not the slightest approach to lighting. The shops display scarcely any frontage, and one has to find out what is sold in them by inquiry. Even the chemist knew

not a word of any living language but Italian. The post office is closed for the greater part of the day, and stamps are sold at the grocer's, but there is no certainty about them. Poor as the place is otherwise, it has many churches. In each confessional box is hung up for the confessor's guidance a graduated schedule of sins, the first sin in the first class being the frequenting of the conventicles of the heretics, especially during the preaching. For the first offence the priest may give absolution. But with the second offence none but the Archbishop of Como may deal. Perhaps this severity is a survival of the persecutions of the Waldenses.

The infant school is held in a gloomy ancient tower, built almost wholly of stone and iron ; and the little children, the girls with full skirts reaching down to their feet, and the little boys in rags and tatters, have no playground but a yard paved with hard round pebbles. Women wear short skirts, with only a handkerchief upon the head ; all little girls wear long skirts that hide their little feet, making them look like diminutive women. In the by-streets we saw many women employed in spinning flax with that most ancient spindle one sees in antique paintings, which hangs revolving suspended in the air from one hand, while with the other the worker spins out the thread. In all things Bormio gives you the impression that you are in a mediæval city, undisturbed as yet by the scream of the locomotive, and the roar of the trains on the iron roads, which had not (in 1883) yet come within fifty miles of this profoundly sleeping community to disturb the slumber of centuries. Beggary is, of course, a popular means of livelihood ; children run kissing their hands after any stranger who looks at all likely to respond to their plaintive cry of "*Caritá, caritá!*" In one place a child of four or five came running after our carriage, kissing her little hand continually until she got a few *centimes*, when an ugly vicious-looking *cretin* girl darted out from behind a hedge, pounced upon the poor baby, gripped her, shook her, lifted her from the ground, and shook her again to get her treasure from the child's clenched hand, but all to no purpose, for the child never relaxed her grip, until she saw a man running down to the rescue, upon which the *cretin* let go, and came full speed after us again, looking the picture of injured innocence, and beseeching for "*caritá!*"

Cretinism is a horrible pest in the Valtelline, a judgment upon the people for their filthy ways. Monstrous throats are seen in every village, and yet with ordinary compassionate care this loathsome disease is easily curable, and more easily preventible, and might certainly be eradicated altogether by attention to a few simple sanitary rules.

1883.

The Stelvio Pass.

THE STELVIO PASS.

History of the Great Road—Ascent on Foot—Alpine compared with English Lake Scenery—The Tunnels and Galleries—Hot Springs of Bormio—Dolomite—Long Waterfalls—The Spondalunga—Fighting in 1858—The Zigzags—Cold barren Region—Monte Cristallo—Fourth Cantonière—Summit—View over the Ortler Range—Sublime Scenery—Its Effect on Different Minds—Down to Trafoi—The Murderer Tourville—The Madatsch Glaciers by Night and by Sunrise—Ruskin on Alpine Scenery—The "Three Holy Springs"—The Church at Trafoi—Descent to Meran.



WE went up the Stelvio three times—once on foot half-way up and back to Bagni di Bormio to dinner in the evening; the second time, we walked to the summit, slept at the fourth Cantonière, and returned next day, also on foot; the third time was on our happy walking tour to Meran, when we went up in the *voiture poste*, and walked down on the Austrian side to Trafoi. Having thus stated what were my various opportunities, such as they were, for the exploration of this stupendous mountain pass, I will proceed to describe it to the best of my power.

The grand Stelvio road commences gently to rise just after leaving Bormio, from which it ascends continually by windings and zigzags to Ferdinandshöhe, the summit, where there is no level space and the descent commences at once. To this point, called also Stilfserjoch, Passo di Braulio, and Giogo di Stelvio, is a distance from Bormio by road of fifteen miles. Thence it descends continually by innumerable windings twenty miles further to Prad, where it debouches in the Valley of the Vintschgau, at the river Adige. Therefore, from foot to foot is a distance by road of thirty-four miles.

Bormio, where the rise commences, is 4,012 feet above the level of the sea; the summit is 9,045 feet; the ascent is therefore of 5,033 feet. Prad is 2,940 feet high, so that the descent is 6,105 feet; and the Italian foot is higher by 1,072 feet than the Tyrolese.

We learn something of the history of this colossal work from a large marble tablet let into the rock just between the high wooden bridge and

the first short tunnel, a little above the hotel. It was constructed by order of Francis I., Emperor of Austria, P.F.A.,* and is stated to have been made from Bormio to *Athesis*,† over the pass of the Braulio, which is the name of the torrent that rises in the mountain and joins the Adige at Premadio. It is here stated to be the highest pass in Europe for carriage traffic, to have been begun in 1820 and opened in 1825 by Archduke Rainer. Then follow the names of the architect, Charles Doneganni, the contractor, and others. Five years seem but a short time for so colossal a work; but a large part of the army was employed upon it in a time of peace.

Before the Stelvio road was made, there was no possibility of passing this mountain at all, except on foot by the most adventurous mountaincers; and to reach the Valtelline from the Vintschgau upon wheels, the only way was to ride from Trafoi, on the Tyrolese side, by excessively rough and steep tracks to the fourth and highest Cantonière, where a road still used takes one over the Umbrail Pass or Wurmserjoch, about 1,000 feet lower than the Stilfserjoch, on to Santa Maria, in the Münsterthal; then over the Buffalora and Ofener Passes to Zernetz, up the Lower Engadine and Pontresina, over the Bernina Pass, and so down into Italy at Tirano, a long journey of nearly 120 miles instead of the odd twenty. The Austrian Government wished to purchase the Pass of Santa Maria to carry their road through it, but the Government of the Grisons refused, compelling the Austrian engineers to penetrate a region hitherto unknown except to the goat-herd and the chamois-hunter. From Austria the military road lay through Innsbrück, over the Brenner Pass by Botzen to Verona. Some idea of the difficulty of the mountain roads before Napoleon I. taught on the St. Bernard how to construct military roads over great mountain passes, may be obtained by observation of the excessively rough, rocky, and steep ox-cart roads and mule-tracks still used in preference over the mountain passes for the ordinary traffic of the peasantry. I have seen a team of oxen resting for a minute at the foot of some steep, terribly stiff bit of road on bare uneven rock, and then, in their quiet, dull, patient way, pull up it a heavy load of

* PII. FELICIS. AUGUSTI: a frequent attribute of Roman Catholic Emperors.

† The Adige or Etsch, so called by Strabo.

timber or stone without the least apparent effort or distress. In the same way they would get a heavily-laden cart over the St. Gothard or the Brenner. Stout little packhorses, heavily laden, and generally headed by a white animal, will walk by themselves over such places, the peasant drivers slowly trudging before them.

As for the Stelvio, the descent to Bormio, even on foot, would, I presume, have been impracticable, except perhaps during the height of summer, close by the river bed, on account of the enormous buttresses of rock which barrier the mountain side, protruding straight down to the rushing Braulio, all of which are now pierced, tunnelled, or ledged and terraced, for the passage of the road.

After the forced cession by the Austrians of Lombardy to Italy in 1860, there ceased to be any inducement for the Empire of the two-headed eagle to keep up the road, a work of heavy expense after the destructive agency of winter has been in operation, and it fell into disrepair. By degrees, however, the Italian Governments, conscious of its importance, kept their side of it in better order, and now, under the rule of a united Italy, it is rarely, for the three or four summer months that it is open, to be found otherwise than in good repair.

Let us now on foot begin the ascent of the famous pass. We shall not by any means use the great road all the way; certainly not the grand semi-circular sweep from the hotel to the first bridge, where the engineers, with a studied regard to the picturesque, have left standing a huge dark natural obelisk of rock, forty feet high. Perhaps we shall not use more than a third or a fourth of it, either in ascending or descending, as the short cuts between one sharp angle in the road and another are so numerous that a good walker, starting at the same time with the coach, could easily reach the summit the first.

In these lower reaches of the road we are upon the battle-ground of the Garibaldian irregulars with the Austrian troops in 1859, when first the Austrians, then the patriots, held the large buildings of the ancient and the modern Baths, and made them into barracks, when the wooden bridge was cut down, and after much fighting in these awful gorges the Imperial troops were driven back in wild confusion and with great loss, destroying behind them the third Cantonière, which is still lying in ruins.

On the left, deep down below, lies the gloomy gorge of the foaming, tossing Braulio, whence rise abruptly, at an angle of forty-five degrees, the bare, torrent-furrowed flanks of the Scale. Fresh as we were from our own mountain home, the change from the tender grace and exquisite refined loveliness of the sweet scenery of our own land of blue lakes and wild heather-clad fells to the grim and gloomy grandeur of the colossal masses amongst which we were now moving could not but be accompanied with those emotions which no one who is wise will endeavour to transfer from the recesses of his own mind to the inaccessible depths of another's. I only wish to say that I have no sympathy with those who can return from the mighty storm-beaten Alps to depreciate by comparison the less sublime, but perhaps far more really beautiful, scenery at home.

We rise rapidly by the cuts, slowly by the road, which I feel certain could be easily traversed by means of the modern admirable invention of the bicycle or the tricycle, which, we learn from letters in the *Times*, have been used with perfect success in crossing the Brenner and other passes. The galleries or tunnels are boldly pierced through the opposing buttresses which used to make this vast ravine impassable—tunnels dark, dripping, and sloppy after every fall of rain or summer snow. Underneath one a torrent from the mountain rushes down with much noise, scientifically carried harmlessly through; in another the dark passage curves round, and is therefore doubly gloomy, though in most of them there are lateral apertures to let in a little light, through which we look down the deep gorge. Where they are roofed in with massive beams it is for the purpose of carrying the avalanches of snow, or the torrents of boulders and fragments over them, and the roof is therefore carefully laid at the same inclination as the mountain-side above, so as to offer no impediment to the sliding ruin. The tunnels, seven in number, and measuring in all 2,220 feet, or about half a mile, are all between the wooden bridge and the gorge of the Braulio, within a space of four or five miles. The rest of the way there are no tunnels.

Towering up on the left is a dolomite mountain. The hot springs of Bormio burst out in nine places from within the yellow cavernous rock of magnesian limestone, which is named after the Genevese geologist

Dolomieu.* Probably this mountain contains within its depths a great lake of mineral water, issuing warm and wholesome in the neighbourhood, which hence is called Bagni di Bormio.

We sit and rest on a flower-enamelled bank, and watch the long water-falls for ever streaming down the opposite perpendicular mountain, "those bold, those bright, those sky-blue water-falls." The dolomite limestone only caps the slate of which the Stelvio mountains consist, and the streams which gush out from the mountain flow from the junction of the limestone with the talc slate. The former, ochreous-tinted, cavernous, and pitted, lies immediately upon the scarred, furrowed, and contorted layers of dun grey slate, which lie closely wedged upon one another with the regular order of courses of masonry, but twisted and corrugated, rent and furrowed with long deep vertical gashes, like the well-known twisted rocks by the Lake of Lucerne. These long thin streams, falling 1,000 feet sheer almost vertically, form a very pretty study of Nature. That which I see before me breaks out from the junction of the slate and the dolomite as a broad wavy ribbon of silver, widening and shallowing as it descends, here turned aside by interposing ledges of rock, gently curving there or abruptly bending, and finally spreading out into a beautiful fan-shaped filmy veil, gracefully floating in air, a perpetually varying, slowly descending stream of gauzy liquid silver.

The great distance between the observer and the falling water gives rise to an illusion, the stream appearing to descend silently, slowly, and at leisure, in a manner which would be exchanged for din, and hurry, and fury if we could stand just before it. This majestic silent calmness is observable in any great water-fall seen from a distance,† and it is very noticeable in the majestic long water-fall of Piz Languard, near Pontresina, which, after issuing from the mountain-top with its accurate curve of projection, conveys no sense of velocity, and is accompanied with no noise of falling water.

* By the Fonte Pliniana, situated at the entrance of the deep gorge of the Braulio, in the warm rock, grow patches of a minute maiden-hair fern, called, I understand, *Adiantum bormiense*, a distinct species, and found elsewhere only in Southern Italy. It is much to be desired that the small quantity there is should be protected from wanton and useless depredation.

† Murray is surely in error in calling this water-fall the source of the Adda, which descends the Val di Fraele.

The dolomite not only caps the talc slate; it also overhangs it. Is this light, cavernous, and tufaceous formation actually harder and better able to resist the constant wear of atmospheric action than the laminated slate? I suppose it must be so, for the crumbled fragments that lie in conical heaps at the base consist only of débris of shattered slate, not of dolomite.

With the valuable help of our alpenstocks, and with the lightest possible *impedimenta*, we toil upwards past the dank and dismal tunnels and wooden galleries, wondering at the vast overhanging ponderous masses of rock, peering over precipitous ledges into the furious foaming torrent of the Braulio, a thousand feet below—the vast and awful torrent-furrowed precipices of Monte Braulio rising from the impetuous river's bed bluff, sheer, and sharp into the bright blue sky.

"Brook and road
Were fellow-travellers in this gloomy pass,
And with them did we journey several hours
At a slow step. The immeasurable height
Of woods decaying, never to be decayed,
The stationary blast of water-falls,
And in the narrow rent, at every turn,
Winds thwarting winds, bewildered and forlorn,
The torrents shooting from the clear blue sky,
The rocks that muttered close upon our ears,
Black drizzling crags that spake by the wayside
As if a voice were in them, the sick sight
And giddy prospect of the raving stream,
The unfettered clouds and region of the heavens,
Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light,
Were all like workings of one mind, the features
Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree,
Characters of that great Apocalypse,
The types and symbols of Eternity,
Of first, and last, and midst, and without end."

WORDSWORTH.

The first Cantonière is passed, a rambling and deserted-looking place, and the second, which the Austrians left in ruins and has never been rebuilt. It is getting colder and colder as we reach the road-makers' huts; and here we arrive at a singular portion of our journey, called the Spondalunga, or long wall. We are at the foot of a wide-extended, almost

regular inclined plane, free from rocks and ravines, across whose bleak and barren face the road is cut in manifold long zigzags, of which from a point about half-way up we can count the nineteen acute angles. The coach occupies a considerable time in traversing all this long series of sides of isosceles triangles, while we steeply and laboriously climb up their bases on one side of the sloping plane, covering it in half the time that the horses take. The loose and broken soil is here richly carpeted with the beautiful *Dryas octopetala*, pretty common in altitudes over 6,000 feet. In the late autumn, the higher slopes are glowing with great crimson patches of, I think, *Rhododendron intermedium;* but it had long been out of flower, and I may be mistaken. Looking far away down the gorge by which we came up, we see the black mouths of the seven tunnels, and their grim-looking port-holes, looking very much like the batteries in the rock of Gibraltar, or the pierced galleries of the Lake of Lucerne.

On the Spondalunga took place a severe engagement between the Austrian and the Garibaldian troops on July 10th, 1859. The former, mostly hardy Tyrolese jägers from Meran, had encamped for two nights on the snowy steeps of Monte Cristallo, with no better covering than their woollen rugs. Advancing down the pass, on reaching the long zigzags they could see the Italian leaders emerging from the tunnels, and planted their guns in the long upper reaches of the road. The Italians from below fired disadvantageously at long range the whole day, but their shot fell far short, and they lost about sixty men, while their enemy's loss was but one or two. There was very little fighting at close quarters.* But it was after all a wasted battle, as the armistice had been concluded the day before, though the news of it had not yet reached the opposing forces.

Having cleared these great zigzagged slopes, we arrive in a cold and barren region, where wide-extending fields piebald with snow begin to appear, and reach a desolate table-land, bordered by the dull glaucous green slopes below Piz Umbrail on the left, and the long and graceful gently-descending sweeps of Monte Cristallo on the right, with its more

* This information was communicated to me by the Rev. Father Paul, a Benedictine of Meran, who was present as chaplain to a detachment consisting of students from the gymnasium and of peasants and Tyrolese jägers.

abrupt and broken glacier front. This beautiful mountain remains an object of remarkable grace and loveliness all the remaining way to the summit, its delicately outlined cones cleaving the pale blue sky at a wide angle which combines consummate loveliness with the most majestic splendour.

But there is no beauty in the uninteresting foreground. Here all is bleak and barren. Besides the rank grass, hardly any signs of vegetation are to be seen, except the great ragged thorny thistles (*Cirsium lanceolatum*) scattered in lonely clumps about the stony banks. In this valley of desolation is the third Cantonière, affording rude shelter and coarse refreshment. A little way further on is the little chapel of Santa Maria, with the priest's poor abode at its side. Even near the summit of the bleak and once terrible Stelvio, a poor but sufficient chapel and its resident priest! Would it be inconsistent with the principles of the Reformed Faith to provide the means of grace *everywhere*, where the three or four might be gathered together in answer to whose prayers the promised blessing would descend?

Up higher we see the yet distant white walls of the better known and more frequented fourth Cantonière of Santa Maria, quite close to the Swiss frontier, where we spent one bitter cold night in the middle of September. The visitors to the Ortler Spitze, and to Piz Umbrail especially, have all enjoyed the rude but hearty hospitality of the fourth Cantonière, and the leathery tasteless cakes called bread, and rejoiced perhaps in the refreshing, invigorating chill of winter in the midst of the summer heat which fiercely beats on the green valleys below.

I can say nothing of Piz Umbrail except at second-hand. We had intended to ascend it, no difficult matter even for elderly folks; but there was a bitter and violent cold wind blowing, to be encountered only by limbs and lungs of youthful vigour. All that we saw therefore of this famous spectacular ridge was its long, black, sharply serrated edge; and instead, we resolved to continue our walk to the summit of the pass, a distance of two miles further by the road, and an ascent of 1,000 feet. Here the zigzags are at their widest and their sharpest, and we found snow-drifts by the road-side ten feet deep, the road frozen hard, and long icicles hanging from the rocks. The short cuts are over the rockiest,

roughest ground in the whole ascent; but we are pleased to find the shaggy, purple *Ranunculus glacialis* peeping out beside us through the snow. Many rare Alpine plants are to be found here by those who may have time to look for them. The red rocks of the Rothli Spitze overhang the left of the road, and the lovely prolonged stretches of the snow plains of Cristallo and Scorluzzo still crown the southern horizon with beauty unspeakable. These are the lofty Alpine heights where it never rains, and all the moisture from above descends either as finely-powdered snow, drifting before the wild winds, or in quieter weather, crystallising in six-rayed stars. Nor does the snow here ever melt. It only evaporates, or, partially melting, goes to form the mighty glacier. "Das ist alter Eis," said a guide to me, to distinguish the glacier from the adjacent snow.

At last we stand upon the summit, having attained our object easily, and without any danger whatever, which I mention, simply because, in common with many other inexperienced mountaineers, we had entertained vague ideas as if the magnificent Stelvio route was now as it was in times past, and not a beautiful summer excursion to be enjoyed on foot, and without the slighest necessity for a guide.

The wind is keen and cutting as we reach the square, grey, granite monument which crowns the summit, inscribed with the words "Tirol," "Lombardo," and which marks the boundary of the Austrian and the Italian dominions. There are not a dozen yards of level ground here. As soon as you have done ascending, if you are going on, you must begin to descend. Here stands the highest inhabited house in Europe, occupied by a road surveyor. But on this particular occasion when we paused to take in the inexpressible grandeur of the prospect on the Tyrolese side, we were not going on, but sat down in a sheltered nook on Austrian ground to try to photograph the scene in our memories.

Before us lies spread a vast circuit of towering, snow-crowned Alps, the monarch of them all—the imperial Ortler, 12,814 feet high, and the highest mountain in Germany—standing out loftily above the inferior, yet scarcely less stately, dominations. The Ortler is often spoken of as a snowy dome. But this description is scarcely accurate, the globular summit being broken by many black and jagged ridges. The range is broken with frowning, beetling crags, scored transversely with huge

ledges of rock supporting immensely deep masses of snow and ice. Enormous buttresses of bare, black rock separate from each other three steeply-precipitous ice-torrents, of a shining steel blue, in places glowing with the very peculiar luminous glow-worm glimmerings of green of which I could not explain the origin. These ice-torrents hang suspended motionless on the vast perpendicular flanks of the Ortler and the Madatsch, unutterably sublime and beautiful, with quite enough of the terrible to send a thrill of awe through the innermost soul of the beholder. They rise before us, wall above wall, terrace upon terrace, irregular and broken, with softer and with deeper shades of green, like the unfathomable sea, or blue like the vault of heaven, and seeming, in their vertical descent, as if they had been arrested in mid-career; but at times break off with a loud roar, descending in ten thousand fragments into the moraines beneath.

The glaciers appear to be slowly melting below under the summer heat, but faster than they can be reinforced from above by accretions of winter snow and ice; and it is commonly remarked that the glaciers everywhere seem to be receding year by year. There runs the dark irregular line which shows where the ice is abruptly broken off, and where the grey glacier-torrent streams forth from beneath its icy caverns, and around its edges, with the incessant roar of multitudinous waters, making up in number what they lack in bulk. If we want to know what the Alps once were, we have only to see what Greenland and Labrador are now. The slow revolutions which are for ever changing the face of our planet, are all illustrated in some part or another of the manifold pages of the book of Nature.

A very charming but peculiar feature of the scene was the constant swirling of powdery snow over all the distant mountain summits, lifted up like a light gauzy veil into the transparent blue by the violent action of the eddying wind. Drifting spiculæ of this fine snow-dust were blown against our faces as we sat in our cosy nook; and down the long slopes of Monte Cristallo, the pure and down-like eddying wreaths of snow, all in gentle motion, described the most beautiful figures imaginable.

Far, very far away, down in the valley, appear the green pastures and the dark pine forests of Tyrol. But they do little to lessen the sublime wildness of the Alpine scene.

The St. Gothard, the finest pass in Switzerland, is 6,936 feet high. The St. Bernard, the least interesting in point of scenery, perhaps the most interesting from its associations, is 8,120; the Stelvio is 9,213, and therefore more than a thousand feet higher than the highest carriage road in Switzerland.

The extraordinary grandeur of the scene eastward from the summit is deeply impressive, and most memorable. One asks oneself the question, and not in vain, why a spectacle combining every character of bleak and barren desolation, a wide, waste wilderness of huge precipices and perilous glaciers, lapped one over another, should fill the mind above all other sentiments with a true, pleasing sense of beauty. Upon a couple of tippling, slow-witted Germans and the dull mechanical driver, who, to our sorrow, were our sole companions driving up the pass, in our third and last journey, the features of the scenery made no more impression than Salisbury Plain would have made. Once a stolid being of this description was my companion in a walk up my much-loved Duddon valley, which he had never seen before. But as he seemed to take no special notice of anything, I called his attention to the noble Wallabarrow crag, one of the most imposing rocks in Great Britain. He looked up without the faintest intimation of interest, and remarked, "I think I have seen bigger ones abroad!"

Cultivation and natural refinement are essential to the reception into the mind of most of the higher feelings of our nature. But is the world made for man alone, as its noblest creature? Are we, indeed, the highest intelligences that people this earth? And are the unnoticed flowers of the wilderness, and the glittering gems of the secret mine, made to delight none but human eyes which may never rest upon them? Nay, but it is reasonable to believe, although from the nature of the case it is incapable of proof, that millions of beings, superior to ourselves, unseen, unheard, perhaps not unfelt, may people the air, float in ether, enjoy the liquid lapse of the bubbling torrent, and inhabit the woods, the mountains, the glaciers with an infinitely higher appreciation of the wonders of creation than we purblind mortals enjoy even at our best. Therefore I may be allowed to believe that the ice-torrents of the Ortler, and the dark precipices that buttress its towering crags and

pinnacles, and the celestial beryl-like and azure spaces that seem to float over some of the crevasses, are beheld by more than ourselves, with a higher appreciation, and form a majestic temple wherein God is daily and hourly worshipped with hymns of praise, of which we may, if we are devout believers, catch some faint echoes.

Let us descend from this cold eminence. Take away the road with its fifty zigzags to Trafoi, "using up" eleven miles and covering just six, and I cannot see how we should get down alive at all, the descent being excessively steep, and forming an angle with the horizon, I should say, of 40°, while 35° is the utmost limit at which it is possible to climb on hands and knees, or to descend without support. The grand road, however, has been constructed with such an infinity of sharp zigzags, lapping so closely together, taking every advantage afforded by the configuration of the ground, that carriages, without locking a single wheel, can bowl all the way down merrily at a cheerful trot. So at least we saw our own conveyance going down for a long while after we had gladly taken our leave of it. Such is the road just above the spot from which Tourville, in 1876, threw down his unhappy wife into the torrent below, of which the exact spot is marked by a black and white cross by the roadside.*

Very few short cuts are available, and we find it far better to follow the windings, except in three or four places. But these windings become very tedious on arriving near Trafoi, our destination for the next two nights, which, though we can see the pretty little nestling Alpine village only half a mile off, far below us, we shall not be able to reach without walking from side to side for two or three miles. We were much struck with the difference in the vegetation in descending on the Tyrolese side, which was both more varied and more abundant.

During the whole descent the towering masses of the Ortler and the Madatsch ranges bound the view on our right. The left side attracts no attention by picturesque beauty, but looks down upon us sternly and forbiddingly. My botanical case fills rapidly here in the different flora

* This abominable wretch was tried at Botzen, found guilty, and, by the special clemency of the Emperor, sentenced to fifteen years' penal servitude! Before his committal he had the remains of his victim buried in the Protestant *Friedehof* of Meran, and a pompous monument erected over them. I have just lately seen that he has died in a penitentiary.

of the eastern side of the Stelvio, and I pass the number of 150 species new to me, found, examined, and named, unknown or rare as indigenous to England. As we descend past Franzenshöhe and the level of 7,000 feet, about half-way down we meet, with a feeling of comfort, a warmer temperature, and pursue our interesting way through the pine forests, reaching valleys carpeted with a richer verdure and enamelled with gayer flowers. And so we reach Trafoi, having descended nearly 4,000 feet, or a distance of eleven miles by road, and about six in a direct line. Here we find our luggage arrived in perfect safety, and the custom-house officer not in the least disposed to trouble us or himself to open our trunks. He takes my word for it, with a good-natured smile, that I have nothing to declare, and continues to smoke his pipe in peace undisturbed. The comfort of the inn (chiefly comfortable, however, to optimists like ourselves), and the loveliness of the situation, dispose us to stay two or three days, as there is no particular hurry to reach Meran. True, the wash-basins are like pie-dishes; the towels like pocket-handkerchiefs; and the bread like chamois leather; but we have bid farewell on crossing the Stelvio to the hard pillows of Italy. Our bedroom commands most magnificent views, and the landlady, Frau Ortler, "of that ilk," and the maidens are all good-tempered.

No landscape can be more picturesque than that in which the small village of Trafoi is situated. We saw it all to perfection from our windows, under a rather novel aspect, at two in the morning, under the bright silvery light of the full moon, and again just before sunrise. The best bedroom has four windows looking out, two over the Ortler, two over the lower ranges. At 2 a.m. the cold pale rays of moonlight flood the gleaming glaciers and their fretted edges with a sheen like that of molten silver. Between the great glaciers or Ferners of the Madatsch, the Ortler, and the Trafoier Ferner, bright almost as day, rise grim and terrible the vast black buttresses of rock, and, dark chief of all, the Madatsch Spitze, which I am surprised to learn has been conquered by the hardy Alpine climbers, rising sharply to the height of the glaciers, and with only one or two ledges apparent at this distance. A dark and pinnacled tower, it abruptly divides two great ice cataracts. Before sunrise we were up again, to marvel in a kind of ecstacy at the same view

glorified and sublimed by the rising majesty of the sun. First one fine point of snow kindled a glowing beacon light, then another burst into a ruddy flame. Then another, and another pointed summit assumed the radiant rosy light of morning. And the sunlight stole softly and slowly down from the pure snowy peaks, and the bluish greys and greens of the glaciers. And the virgin robes of spotless snow spread out and clothe the Alpine summits with that transcendent light which the finest artists decline to imitate on canvas; for it is a light, the splendour of which we could not have imagined from description or from picture, had we never seen it with our own eyes. And now at length that purest light reaches the rocky fragments that strew the upper moraine; and the dark forests of pine exchange their sombre mantle of night for the richer hues of the morning radiance, until the crowded pointed spires and the densely serried columns of the thousands of majestic pines stood revealed in the glowing light of a glorious September sun.

How wonderfully the great Creator of the universe has combined and interwoven inexplicable beauty with every feature of natural scenery; or, which is the same thing, how admirably has He constructed the human mind with that perception of beauty which enables it to view the scenes of nature with deep emotion, and to admire profoundly even where it fails in every attempt to analyse and to explain. Mr. Ruskin has well pointed out the singular fitness of the pine, in respect of physical beauty, for the places it inhabits by preference. Where barren mountains and walls of precipice, cut by deep ravines, and strewn with mighty fragments and boulders, would present to the eye only disorder and desolation; where all the lines are broken and disjointed, and every contour rugged and disfigured, there, nestling in the shady hollows, clothing the steep sides with the robes of dignity, crowning the sky-line with a symmetrical fringe of beauty, rise the crowded pines, straight, formal, angular, each as accurately shaped, and all as exactly alike, as their own beautiful cones, each, except under violence or pressure, pointing with its acute topmost shoots with accuracy and precision to the zenith. No matter how or why, this harmonious combination of the rude and uncomformable with the straight and the formal is certainly agreeable to our perception of the beautiful, as often sharp contrasts are

pleasing to the ear in music. And the curling vine that creeps so tenderly around the walls and shelters the roof of the cottage home, and embowers the garden walk, and overarches the village roads in the Tyrol, is not more grateful to the eye than these dense dark spaces, among which shoot up the straight and crowded columns, bare and leafless, roofed in by the deep green verdure, above which rise the massed and serrated ridges of the sharply-pointed summits of the pine forest.

For this reason I conceive the slender church spire to be a far more pleasing object amidst mountain scenery than a short low tower, while the eye is craving for contrast, and not for imitation.

No one comes to Trafoi that has a couple of hours to spare without visiting the famous "Three Holy Springs," which are reached by a very pleasant walk over green meadows, and over the soft yielding turf of the forest walks. Here the pines are not, as in the Engadine, dead or dying by thousands, standing up gaunt and grey, and hung with long dishevelled fringes of rugged grey mosses. For here every tree is fresh, strong, and flourishing. On our way we gather with great admiration the first specimens we have seen of that noblest of all the beautiful tribe of Gentians, the *G. asclepiadea*, full two feet high, and hung with bells of rich deep purple.

Here, too, as in our descent, we observe the singularly beautiful optical phenomenon of a fixed, pale, and delicate faint opal light of the subtlest tenderness, apparently as if a sheet of pale blue glass were hung suspended over the ice between the glacier and the spectator. This beautiful vision seemed to hover at a slight distance from the surface, and to hang immovable over particular spots.

There can be no doubt about the great beauty of the spot chosen by the devout Tyrolese for the erection of the pretty little pilgrimage church of the "Drei Heilige Brunnen," though a candid mind, uninformed in the deep principles which lead to the formation of "pious beliefs," would smile sceptically at the ingenious contrivance which makes it appear to the eyes of the simple as if spiritual powers had actually fixed here the seat of benevolent wonder-working agencies. At the green and wooded base of the Ortler range, just over the bank of the glacier river, gush out perpetually great torrents of the purest, coldest

spring water, welling out in sparkling, crystal streams, from mossy banks in a score of places. It is a winter resort of bears, from whose frequent visits a grassy level above the springs is called the Bären-boden or bears' play-ground. Where the gushing waters flow in fullest, a rough wooden shed is erected, within which three nearly life-sized figures are erected of our Lord, the Virgin Mary, and St. John, set in a straight line against the wall. Secret pipes, unsuspected by the pious Tyrolese, are passed up through the bodies of the figures, issuing out from the heart of each by an iron spout, and sending forth fresh impetuous streams, which pour themselves away into three holes in the wooden floor, and pass on into the river. On the 29th September, pilgrimages are made to this spot from all the surrounding villages and Sennhütte, and services held in the picturesque church at its side. A small house is built close by for the accommodation of pilgrims.

On our return we visit the miniature church of Trafoi, where scarcely thirty worshippers could gather together. Its walls are covered with devotional pictures and memorials, the most prominent representing a sick man lying upon a bed, at the foot of which stand three gentlemen in the habits of the seventeenth century: one in a scarlet coat, with cocked hat, another in green, the other in white with a green cap. The legend in old German relates how this poor man, having attempted to cross the Stilfserjoch in mid-winter, had been nearly frozen to death, but had been left crippled with the loss of both his feet. In answer to his constant callings upon the saints, those three persons looking so much like courtiers of the seventeenth century, but who were in reality angels sent from heaven in answer to his prayers, came and announced to him his complete recovery, which took place forthwith. If unbelievers ask inconvenient questions, it is sufficient to reply that it is a "pious opinion," which, of course, makes it all true. I have heard it said: "All this may seem very absurd; but the faith is beautiful!"

Another large rude picture, supposed to represent the last judgment, shows us the Judge sitting upon the throne, the Virgin (without the Child) interceding, and the mouth of hell, like a vast dragon's throat belching out fire and flames, devouring the wicked.

We divided the distance of forty miles from Trafoi to Meran into

two stages: by sleeping one night at Eyrs (Schlanders would have been far nicer), after walking to it thirteen miles; then driving to Naturns in the Stell-wagen, and walking the remaining nine to Meran. Of these walks I will say no more than that from Trafoi to Prad, eleven miles, was a regular descent of 2,000 feet down a beautiful valley into which debouches the fine lateral valley of the Suldenthal. High above the road, hanging like an eagle's eyrie upon the rocky mountain side, stands the Alpine village of Stilfs, which gives its name to the mighty pass. At Prad the descent ceases entirely; but the Stelvio road proper is continued three miles further, until it reaches the bridge over the Adige.*

And now we are in the broad and fertile valley of the Vintschgau. At this point the valley to the left runs up by Mals and Nauders to the lower Engadine; and to the right the same valley of the Adige—the Etschthal—carries us through Eyrs, Schlanders, and Naturns to Meran, our abode for the next nine months, in a most rich, and calm, and lovely valley, almost reminding one of the Poet Laureate's

> "island valley of Avilion;
> Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
> Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
> Deep meadowed, happy, fair with orchard lawns,
> And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea."
>
> MORTE D' ARTHUR.

1883.

Just as I was laying down the last corrected sheets of this little work (in all probability my last) I happened to be also arriving at the closing pages of the finest of Charles Dickens' inimitable works of fiction, his own favourite, "David Copperfield," and I felt moved to deep emotion in recognising in his description of a spot not unlike Trafoi the faithful expression of that reciprocity which is always found between God's great Book of Nature and the pages of the responsive heart of a true man.

"I was in Switzerland. I had come out of Italy, over one of the

* "Burmio ad Athesim," as the marble tablet records.

great passes of the Alps, and had wandered with a guide among the bye-ways of the mountains. If these awful solitudes had spoken to my heart, I had not heard their voice, or did not know that I had. I had found sublimity and wonder in the dread heights and precipices, in the roaring torrents, and the wastes of ice and snow ; but as yet they had taught me nothing else.

" I came one evening before sunset down into a valley, where I was to rest. In the course of my descent into it, by the winding track along the mountain-side from which I saw it shining far below, I think some long-unwonted sense of beauty and tranquillity, some softening influence awakened by its peace, moved faintly in my heart. I remember pausing once with a kind of sorrow that was not all oppressive, not quite despairing. I remember almost hoping that some better change was possible within me.

" I came into the valley as the evening sun was shining on the remote heights of snow that closed it in like eternal clouds. The bases of the mountains forming the gorge in which the little village lay were richly green, and high above this gentle vegetation grew forests of dark fir, cleaving the wintry snow-drift, bridge-like and stemming the avalanche. Above these were range upon range of craggy steeps, grey rocks, bright ice, and smooth verdure-specks of pasture, all gradually blending with the crowning snow. Dotted here and there in the mountain's side, each tiny dot a home, were lonely wooden cottages, so dwarfed by the towering heights that they appeared to be too small for toys. So did even the clustered village in the valley, with its wooden bridge across the stream, where the stream tumbled over broken rocks and roared away among the trees. In the quiet air there was a sound of distant singing —shepherd voices ; but as one bright evening cloud floated midway along the mountain's side I could almost have believed it came from there, and was not earthly music. All at once, in this serenity, the great voice of Nature's God spoke to me, and soothed me to lay down my weary head upon the grass and weep as I had not wept yet, since Dora died ! "

No word of comment of mine shall profane this most touching passage.

INDEX.

Alpine scenery, 90, 104; by moonlight and sunrise, 107, 109.
Andermatt old church (note), 87.
Angels' visits, 48.
Anglo-Saxon period, 15.
Anne, Countess of Dorset, Pembroke, and Montgomery, 25, 31.
Aske's Pilgrimage, 20.

B.

Barden Tower, 19, 31.
Beauty, Sense of, 105, 108.
Beggary in Italy, 91.
Bible abroad, 84.
Birks Bridge, 54.
Black Combe, 40.
Bolton Abbey, 13.
,, Woods, 13.
,, Parish Church, 15.
,, foundation, 16.
,, great antiquity, 16.
,, Process of building, 17.
,, Western Tower, 17.
,, Rectory, 17.
,, ruined, 21.
,, estates, 27.
Bormio, 85, 90.
Botany, 60, 83, 99, 107, 109.
Braulio, River, 97.
Brook, Beautiful colours in, 59.
Broughton-in-Furness, 39, 74.
Browning quoted, 31.

C.

Carr, Rev. W., 14.
Caterina, Santa, 90.
Cavendish, House of, 34.
,, Lord Frederick, 34.
Cepina, beautiful iron gates, 86.
Chapels, Roman Catholic, 88, 89, 101.
Clifford, Blackfaced, 17.
,, Family of, 18.
,, Shepherd Lord, 18.
,, Henry, his wild life, 19.
,, household establishment, 24.
Cockley Beck, 57.
Cottages in Duddon Valley, 60.
Countess Pillar, 27.
Craven, Lords of, their disputes, 20.
Cretinism, 92.
Cristallo, Monte, 101.
Cumberland, George, Earl of, 25.

D.

Deer Forests in Cumberland, 20.
,, Wild, 58.
Desolation, Valley of, 31.
Devonshire, Duke of, 27.
Dickens, Charles (quoted), 111.
Dolomite Mountain, 98.
Duddon, River, 53.
,, Sonnets, 53.
,, Hall, 69.
,, Woods, 69.
,, Bridge and Sands, 75.
Dunnerdale Fells, 68.

E.

Education in Switzerland, 83.
,, Free, 82.
Elizabeth, Queen, 23.
Embsay, 16.
"Evening Voluntaries," 47.

F.

"Faëry Chasm," 55.
Felsite Dike, 66.

G.

Garibaldians, 97, 101.
Glacier action, 71.
Glaciers, 104, 108.
Goat's Water and its curious rocks, 72.
Gowdrel Dub, 34, 56.
Grandson, Battle of, 79.
,, Castle of, 80.
Grasmere, 43.
Grimke's, Mrs., cards, 82.

H.

Hailstorms in Switzerland, 84.
Hardknot Castle, 57.
Harter Fell, 54.
Hawthorne, Nathaniel, 46.
Heber's Ghyll, 32.
Helvellyn, 60.
History, ancient and modern compared, 13.
'Hole-in-the-Wall," 14.
Hospenthal, 89.
Human interest in scenery, 49.

I.

Invisible beings, 105.

L.

Lago di Scale, 97.
Loggan Beck, 69.
Lucerne, "glacier garden," 29.

M.

Mackereth, Sarah, the "Westmorland Girl," 41.
Madatsch Spitze, 106.
Meran, 111.
Meschines, 15.
Mountain ash, Curious, 31.
,, streams, 32.
,, scenery, 60.
,, roads, 96.

N.

Nature beautifying ruins, 33.
Neuchâtel, Lake of, 79.
Norton, Richard, 22.
Nortons, Fall of the, 24.
"Nutbrown Maid," 20.

O.

Ortler Spitze, 103.

P.

Parkinson, Canon, 64.
Paul, Rev. Father, 101.
Passes, Alpine, 105.
Pestalozzi, 80.
Pines in Alpine scenery, 109.
Pious belief, 109.
Piz Umbrail, 101.
Posforth Ghyll, 31.

R.

Religion, Change of, at the Reformation, 21.
Rising in the North, 21.
Rock scenery, 33, 55.
Romilly, 15.
Ruskin quoted, 14, 72.
,, his religion, 73, 108.
Rutland, Young, 18.

S.

Sarah Mackereth, the "Westmorland Girl," 41.
Seathwaite Church, 62.
,, Tarn, 61.
September, best season for Lake District, 57.
"Shepherd Lord," 18.
Skipton Castle, 25.
,, Lords of, their personal habits, 24.
Snow on Alps, 90, 104.
Spondalunga, 100.
Standard Hill, 24.
Stelvio Pass, 85, 95.
,, Passage over, 96.
,, Road, 95, 97.
,, Summit, 103.
,, Tunnels, 97.
Stepping stones, 65.
Strid, The, 15, 28.
Switzerland, education, 81.
,, intemperance, 81.

T.

Temperance in England and Switzerland, 83.
Tennyson quoted, 111.

Three Holy Springs, 109.
,, Shire Stones, 59.
Tourville the murderer, 106.
Trafoi, 106, 107, 110.
Tresero, Monte, 90.

U.

Ulpha, 67.

V.

Valley of Desolation, 31.
Volcanic action, 71.

W.

Walker, Rev. Robert, "The Wonderful," 44, 63.
Wallabarrow Crag, 66.
Waterfalls in Stelvio Pass, 99.
Waterspout of 1826, 31.
Weathering of Rocks, 33.
Westmorland Girl, 39.
Wharfedale, 14.
,, Scenery of, 29.
,, trees and flowers, 29, 30, 31.
White Doe of Rylstone, 21.
Wordsworth, 42.
,, quoted, *passim*, 43.
Wrynose Gap, 54.

Y.

Yverdon, 80.

THE END.

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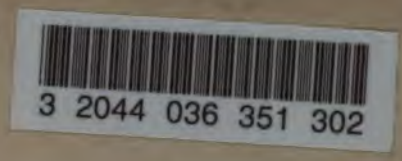
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